CBW

Number One
For PCV Professionals

COACH AND BUS WEEK Wednesday August 9, 2006 **Issue 742** £2.50

1st with the news every Wednesday

THIS WEEK

Face to Face...
... with Dave Parry
page 30

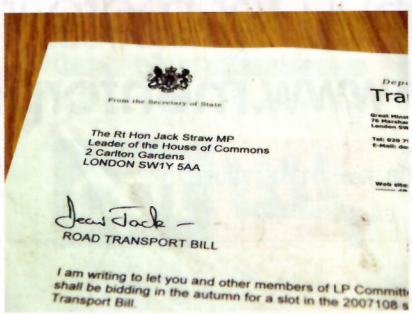
VOSA Insight
On the road with the VOSA team in Taunton
page 24

The Kings Ferry
Operator embraces technology
page 36

Transport Watch
Inside Westminster
page 28

Real Time Insight

RTI will soon be fitted to more than half the UK's buses. We look at the technology involved page 32


The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Leader of the House of Commons
2 Carlton Gardens
LONDON SW1Y 5AA

ROAD TRANSPORT BILL

I am writing to let you and other members of LP Committ
shall be bidding in the autumn for a slot in the 2007108 s
Transport Bill.

EXCLUSIVE

Leaked Cabinet Letter

The bus industry's future spelled out page 4

Coach Trade Event

16th and 17th August

Mentor
Coach & Bus Ltd

Thinking of buying a new or used coach?
Then why not come and view our fantastic range of coaches.
There will be a range of vehicles on display including the new MAN Plaxton Panther.

Special Offer

Excellent prices on Pre-Owned Coaches

Come and see the new MAN Plaxton Panther

Please call 01709 705500 for more information

Visit our Website at www.mentorplc.com

Tel: 01709 705500 Fax: 01709 700007

E&OE

CBW

COACH AND BUS WEEK
is published by Rouncy Media,
First Floor, 3 The Office Village,
Cygnet Park, Forder Way, Hampton,
Peterborough PE7 8GX

Switchboard 01733 293240
Fax 0845 280 2927
Web www.cbwnet.co.uk

EDITORIAL

Editor Mark Williams
01733 293243, mob 07720 769869
mark.williams@rouncymedia.co.uk
Technical and Minibus Editor
Martin Cole 01733 293245,
mob 07885 692144
martin.cole@rouncymedia.co.uk
News Editor Andrew Peace
01733 293244
andrew.peace@rouncymedia.co.uk
Editorial Assistant Rupert King
01733 293482
rupert.king@rouncymedia.co.uk
Art Director Keith Simpson
01733 293240
keith.simpson@rouncymedia.co.uk
Office Manager Jacqui Grobler
01733 293240
jacqui.grobler@rouncymedia.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Gabriel Conway (Eire) 0879 222070
Andrew Jarosz (North) 01132 566505
Lorna Sutcliffe (Tourism)
davlor@ntlworld.com

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager
Vicki Culverhouse 01733 293246
vicki.culverhouse@rouncymedia.co.uk

Display Sales
Gary Kemp 01733 293247
gary.kemp@rouncymedia.co.uk

Classified Sales
Beth Foster 01733 293480
beth.foster@rouncymedia.co.uk

Craig Barr 01733 293249
craig.barr@rouncymedia.co.uk

PUBLISHING

Director Derek Phillips 01733 293240
derek.phillips@rouncymedia.co.uk

Director Andy Sutcliffe 01733 293242
andrew.sutcliffe@rouncymedia.co.uk

Publisher Stephen Curtis
01733 293240
stephen.curtis@rouncymedia.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK 0870 830 4969
Overseas + 44 1858 438782

CBW Subscriptions, Tower House,
Sovereign Park, Market Harborough,
Leics. LE16 9EF

Full annual subscription rate for 51 issues:
UK £69, Europe/Eire £115, USA and rest of the world £140

www.cbwnet.co.uk

ISSN: 1351-3877

Printed by: William Gibbons & Sons

© 2006 Rouncy Media Ltd. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval or transmitted in any form or system or in any means without the written permission of the directors or editor. This is considered a breach of copyright and action will be taken where this occurs. This magazine must not be lent, sold, hired or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any authorised cover by way, or by trade, or annexed to any publication or advertising matter without first obtaining written permission from the directors. Rouncy Media Ltd cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or other material.

New Bill: new danger

We all know transport legislation needs a good shake-up – and it appears Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander is seeking to do just that.

In a leaked letter to the Rt Hon Jack Straw, he has outlined a proposed new Transport Bill that will bring national road pricing much closer to reality and give PTEs and local authorities the powers to introduce franchised bus operation.

Mr Alexander seems concerned the Secretary of State has the ability, at present, to approve local schemes, but no scope at all for setting consistent national standards. With the new Bill, he hopes to redress the situation, enabling central government to enforce standards, fares and frequencies through the authorities where franchises are operated.

But he also advocates allowing more scope for intervention in services to be operated in partnership with those local authorities not disposed to running their own transport network, or franchises.

Despite this, he claims weak governance has not enabled PTAs to function properly, largely because they rely on council or district funding and consequently exercise little decisive control over the salvation of the industry. Another fix is pending here.

But what will franchising mean for most operators? It will guarantee exclusivity in a specific area, free from competition – but at a price that will dictate operation of both key and marginal routes, vehicle age profile and frequency.

Win the franchise for a particular town and it could prove very lucrative in the short term. But lose it to a competitive bid the next time around and where is there to go? If you can't compete on the network or in the area do you just close the doors and send the staff home?

Mr Alexander will have some very careful working out to do if his policies are to be broadly welcomed by the commercial sector as a whole. Introducing road pricing to force people onto the buses may sound like manna from heaven, but it could mean a real rollercoaster ride for bus operators – and may spell certain death for many of the smaller ones.

Martin Cole
Technical Editor

Coach and Bus Week is a supporter of the following organisations:

COACH TOURISM COUNCIL
Promoting Travel and Tourism by Coach

ABC

PPA

cpt

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

Contents

News Exclusive!
Leaked letter reveals government's plans to shake-up transport
Starts page 4

VOSA Insight
Behind the scenes at a roadside investigation
pages 24-25

Get Real
Why RTI will soon be standard technology on buses everywhere
pages 32-35

Face to Face
Operator Dave Parry says the coach industry must raise its game
pages 30-31

Kings Ferry
Operator has embraced technology
pages 36-38

Regulars

News	4
Bus News	6
Coach News	8
Tour News	10
Regional News	18
Inbox	22
Open Platform	26
Transport Watch	22
Deliveries	42
Technology	36
People	45
Classified	47

EXCLUSIVE

PTEs to get franchise powers

New law to make franchising easier, and more powers for Traffic Commissioners

The DfT is drawing up a new Road Transport Bill that will see franchising introduced in the city regions, and a bolstering of the role of the Traffic Commissioners.

Metropolitan districts that opt for bus franchising will also be restructured to give stronger political leadership - including elections as for the Mayor of London - and more control over the road network.

Any moves towards franchising will have to be complemented by implementation of a road user charging scheme.

The details of the Bill were given in a letter written by Secretary of State for Transport Douglas Alexander to Jack Straw, the leader of the House, detailing a bid for parliamentary time next year to introduce the Bill. The letter was leaked to *Sunday Times* political editor David Cracknell last week, and then passed to *CBW*.

The main purpose of the bill would be to support efforts to cut congestion and improve public transport, particularly in the major cities outside London, the Secretary of State writes.

He says some councils want to introduce franchising but have been deterred by the tests in the 2000 Transport Act. 'I would like to make franchising easier, particularly where, as in London, a local authority is prepared to introduce road pricing and needs first to be able to guarantee good public transport,' writes the Secretary of State.

The bill will apparently also make some minor changes to the 2000 Act to allow partnership agreements between councils and operators to cover more features, including the frequency of services.

The SoS says current governance arrangements for transport in PTA areas are not 'fit for purpose' and that, 'Councils frequently duck hard area-wide choices, making it difficult for the PTAs to function effectively,' continuing, 'PTAs often cannot implement simple measures like bus lanes, let alone controversial demand management schemes. Weak governance is one reason why we have not encouraged PTAs to move to bus franchising.'

'I therefore propose to take powers to restructure the PTAs. The main components would be giving the new authorities stronger political leadership (possibly involving direct elections) and powers to control traffic on the most important roads. The new structure would be optional except where road pricing or bus franchising was proposed,' he says.

Douglas Alexander

The Bill will also include 'smaller' changes to road transport legislation including the composition and powers of Traffic Commissioners, and powers for vehicle examiners to seize vehicles driven by unlicensed or uninsured drivers.

The minister says the Bill should be largely welcomed although he says bus operators will be nervous about any extension of franchising and so getting the details right will be 'crucial'. He proposes publishing a draft bill next spring. The provisions on road pricing and buses will apply in England and Wales, and changes to local authority governance will apply only to England.

A spokesperson for the DfT repeated the SoS's line that where, as in London, bus use has risen as car restraint measures have been introduced, it has to examine the case for extending that system elsewhere.

Tavish Scott MSP, Scottish minister for Transport visited Wright Group in Ireland last week. William Wright stated "Wright Group currently has over 950 vehicles in operation with all major transport operators in Scotland. Meeting the Minister gave us the opportunity to outline our company's plans for investment and innovation and discuss the development of the Scottish Executive's transport programme."

PSVs still the safest way to travel

DfT figures show bus travel was by far the safest form of transport in 2005, with just nine deaths from accidents, down from 20 in 2004.

There were 354 serious injuries resulting from bus and coach accidents (down 49% on the previous year) and more than 7000 minor injuries (down 15%).

The DfT has also released a compendium of road safety research this week aimed at reducing 'at-work' road traffic accidents.

The research says the most important factor in bus and coach accidents is driver inattention and that non-collision accidents were the most common causes of casualties. Another area of the study, looking at the effects of high-sugar drinks on drivers, has found that they can cause the body to overcompensate with insulin production, causing drowsiness.

It was also claimed that no 'sleepiness detection' devices were reliable and that self-awareness was a far better system. A latter part of the study will be revealed next month and is expected to conclude that certain types of bus priority schemes can increase casualties.

Euro 4 for beginners

***CBW* and the CPT are organizing a conference for operators to get answers on Euro 4 from the experts.**

Called 'Euro 4 for Beginners', the event will be held at the RAF Museum in Hendon on Monday, October 2 – the day after the new regulations come into force.

Scania, Neoman and Evobus will represent the manufacturers, whilst Yara and Eminox represent the suppliers. Each will make a short presentation to delegates before Clive Efford MP, chairman of the CPT's parliamentary group and member of the Transport Select Committee, chairs a Q&A session. A keynote speaker will be confirmed shortly.

The day is free to members of the CPT or the Herts Bus and Coach Operators Association, which also includes dinner in the museum after the conference. The dinner costs £10 + VAT for the first guest of any member, and £25 for subsequent guests or non-CPT members.

Sixty WYPTE 'My Bus' drivers attended a conference and awards presentation in Leeds last Friday. Marcus Roberts, from Bingley and driver of the P34, was voted Driver of the Year after receiving the most nominations from pupils and parents. Users were asked to provide feedback, and the children were invited to send in drawings of their drivers. Steve Barrett won the first award for Highly Recommended Driver and Bill Marriot won the second award.

MPs criticise DfT

The Environmental Audit Select Committee says the DfT has a 'fatalistic' attitude to rising emissions from transport.

Committee chairman Tim Yeo MP says the DfT 'urgently' needs to accelerate its efforts to reduce emissions and that, 'The government should take much more decisive action to shift the balance of affordability in favour of trains, buses and lower carbon cars and lorries'.

He says taxes on air travel and 'gas guzzling' cars should be raised dramatically, and calls for a return to the abolished fuel duty escalator to incentivise cleaner travel, and for speed limits to either be lowered or more effectively enforced. The Committee also endorsed proposals from the Sustainable Development Commission which says the top band of VED should increase to £1,800 for the least fuel efficient vehicles.

Transport is the only sector where emissions have risen since 1990. Transport accounted for some 33 percent of total British carbon emissions in 2004, with road transport alone accounting for 21 percent of the total, and international flights leaving Britain for 5 percent.

Transport minister Stephen Ladyman says imposing taxes on air travel would just penalize poorer people which is why the government is pressing for aircraft to be included in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, which should encourage less polluting aircraft. The government recently announced a variable Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) meaning less economical cars will be charged £210 per year.

Mr Ladyman reportedly told the Committee that cutting the speed limit would be the most cost effective way of fighting pollution.

The cost of smoking

Drivers and operators could be among the hardest hit by the government's Health Bill which is expected to come into effect next summer.

Under the current proposals, which are being considered by parliament now, an offence of 'failing to prevent smoking in a smoke-free place' could land operators with a £2500 fine. Failing to display proper no-smoking signs could result in a £1000 fine, although enforcement officers have the option of a £200 fixed penalty, while the smoker breaking the law receives only a £50 fixed penalty, reduced to £30 if paid within 15 days.

Richard Matthews of AirportCarz is just one of many operators worried about the effect the law could have on his business. He said: "It's all very well saying you want to have smoke-free vehicles and it is clearly a good thing, I don't even think smokers would disagree with it. The trouble is that the whole thing becomes unmanageable when put into practice.

"My company has for the past 30 years operated a no smoking policy and all of our vehicles carry the standard signs, but aggressive passengers often refuse to observe the rule and when rebuked by our drivers, almost invariably become abusive and violent. I am worried this legislation will adopt a broad brush solution and simply punish innocent drivers."

Mr Matthews says that if the current proposals are adopted then he would give up driving public transport vehicles.

A spokesperson for the TGWU said: "Whilst we support attempts to prevent smoking in the workplace, and that includes on transport, we have serious reservations about drivers being expected to enforce smoking bans, not least because their primary responsibility is the safety of passengers and themselves and there should not be any distractions from the road."

The Department of Health is currently running a consultation inviting views on the proposals. Responses can be sent to Smoke-free Regulations Consultation, Health Improvement Directorate, Department of Health, Room 712, Wellington House, 133-135 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG or email to smokefreeregulations@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Briefly

Unilever is warning that public health will suffer if the government presses ahead with plans to ramp up biofuel production. It says a dramatic increase in the use of rapeseed oil and palm oil, essential ingredients of foods such as margarine and the most suitable crop for biofuels, will result in higher prices and shortages and lead to consumers using products containing unhealthy fats.

The first Task and Finish Group meeting, a sub-group of the DfT's Bus Partnership Forum, met last week to examine the potential of 'Enhanced Quality Partnerships'. The DfT says no details of what was discussed can be released at this stage, the Group will make a report to the Forum at its next meeting.

The Office of Fair Trading has published an update on its Frequently Asked Questions on its role in the Bus Industry, said to be required reading for all those in the bus industry. The OFT says some of the advice is still preliminary – the final version will be issued in a few months.

The rise in personal insolvencies widely reported in the media last week has been balanced by a decrease in the number of businesses going bust. The number of companies going into liquidation fell slightly during the first quarter of 2006, to 3,265 firms. This represents a decrease of 3.3% on the same period last year.

Allan Edmondson, head of coach services at the CPT, is leaving to join the Olympic Delivery Authority at the end of October.

As *CBW* closed for press, the DfT announced new guidance for local authorities on setting speed limits – either up or down depending on the circumstances. All authorities have to review their speed limits in line with the new advice by 2011.

BUSES

Briefly

Peterborough's main bus station, Queensgate, has also been closed after glass fell from the ceiling (see Regional News – North). A shattered pane of glass was discovered on the floor last Friday. The station is expected to be closed for up to two weeks as protective scaffolding is erected.

Poland want its bus drivers back! A delegation from Polish city Wroclaw is set to visit London to encourage workers to return over fears that Poland's economy has been weakened by mass migration. Over 230,000 Poles have registered to live and work in Britain since the borders were opened in May 2004, according to official figures.

As it rolls out a refurbishment programme at its Heavy Vehicle Testing Stations, VOSA has awarded a test equipment contract to Danish company BM Autotechnik. The company will supply roller brake testers, and associated products, and emissions analysers. The refurbishment project is expected to last between 3-5 years, although roll-out of the emissions equipment will start almost immediately.

The government has made £700m in funding available to local authorities to upgrade street lighting. The £694m in Private Finance Initiative credits is being given to 15 local authorities in order to improve road safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime. The councils will now need approval of their plans before moving to procurement. A further 20 LAs are currently in a similar scheme.

Go-Ahead Group will announce its preliminary results for the year to July 1, on Friday September 8. It released a positive pre-close trading statement last month.

Consultants Halcrow have been given a contract to plan an RTPI system in Swindon.

Bumper year for Lothian

Profits jump by 25% on increased turnover

Lothian Buses, the only remaining municipally-owned bus operator in Scotland, quadrupled its profits to £16.3m last year, after a one-off property disposal, but has pledged to reinvest the majority of its profits into new buses. Despite this pledge, the company has come in for some criticism after a 16.5% salary hike for chief executive Neil Renilson in the same year that his drivers were out on strike in a bitter pay dispute.

The company, whose shares are spread between three councils, with the City of Edinburgh holding over 91% of the issued capital made a £12m profit on the disposal of its Shrub Hill depot off Leith Walk to housing developers. A £2.2m annual dividend was paid to the councils representing 34.34p per share. Its deficit-laden pension scheme, which had initially threatened to leave the council without its annual dividend, improved with a higher contribution of £4.4m (£2.7m in 2004). Mr Renilson, who also heads up a firm overseeing the integration of the city's trams and buses had a salary increase from £175k to £218k for the year.

Results for the year ended 2005 show that the company's total turnover grew 3% from £73.5m to £75.7m, and operating profits, rose 24% from £3.15m to £3.9m. The pre-tax profit without the exceptional gain was up 20.3% from £3.53m to £4.24m. After payment of dividends, over £9.2m was transferred to the reserves.

Lothian Buses' marketing director Iain Coupar said that since 2000, Lothian Buses has spent £85m on new low-floor buses, with 75 more new ones due over the next six months giving Edinburgh one of the youngest bus fleets in the country. "We have some of the best value fares on offer to bus passengers because, being publicly-owned, the shareholders only expect a divided of £2.2m."

Next year's profits are expected to rise again following the recent 25% flat fare increase to £1, although this was put down to rising fuel prices and the new pay deal for drivers.

SUMMARY

	2005 £000	2004 £000
Turnover	75,683	73,499
Operating Costs	69,197	67,259
Additional FRS 17 pension costs	2,577	3,088
Total costs	71,774	70,347
Operating profit	3,909	3,152
Gain on disposal of land and buildings	12,026	–
Net finance income	336	377
Pre-tax profit	16,271	3,529
Profit after taxation	11,432	2,094
Dividends	2,198	2,198
Retained profit	9,234	(104)

European hybrid application

Allison Transmission is to announce OEM bus contracts for the GM Allison Electric Drive Ep system at this year's IAA exhibition in Hanover (21-28 September).

The Electric Drive, which forms part of a parallel hybrid drive system, is now in volume production for transit bus applications with over 475 in service in 38 cities across North America. Allison says it will reveal its first European commercial applications for the drive alongside the announcement of new OEM contracts.

Allison's display will include a Hybrid Learning Centre where visitors can gain full access to information on the Ep drive system. It promises to cut emissions, optimise fuel economy and raise vehicle performance through its ability to store electric power from regenerative braking and use it for providing initial acceleration or as a blend with mechanical transmission.

Emergency services were scrambled in London last week after a woman became trapped under the wheels of this Stagecoach decker. Late morning last Thursday, a young East London woman crossing the Kingsway on High Holborn

One of Brighton & Hove's new East Lancs/Scanias at Eastbourne

East Lancs for Hove

Brighton & Hove has recently added six East Lancs-bodied Scania OmniDekkas to its fleet, which has become established as its favourite new decker in recent years.

Based on the N94UD chassis these additions to the existing substantial number of OmniDekkas are allocated for different purposes, with the appropriate dedicated liveries. Three operate 'Coaster' services to Eastbourne (see picture), one runs on the Metro 49 service and the two longer 12m vehicles are part of the private hire fleet.

The service buses seat 79 passengers, or 76 with a wheelchair user, while the 12m 'Smarter Charter' vehicles provide 84 seats, or 80 with a wheelchair user. The star Go-Ahead subsidiary is due to receive a further eighteen 12m OmniDekkas in September.

Ticket scam uncovered

Investigations are continuing, despite two men being found guilty of running a ticket scam at Arriva Midlands.

Arriva lost £4,340 in a scam involving two of their bus drivers, Telford Magistrates were told.

Suresh Banga and Mark Dudley used a stolen ticket machine to print off zone tickets which they sold to passengers before pocketing the cash, Mr Mark Linkins, prosecuting, told the court.

Both men admitted charges of false accounting and were fined £500 each and ordered to pay £43 costs. Both drivers have lost their jobs.

Mr Linkins said an undercover officer saw Banga fiddling with his ticket machine. He said there were two ticket machines in use at the Wellington station in Shropshire and Banga sold £33 worth of tickets before the proper machine was used.

was hit by the bus and aught under the rear wheels. She was freed and taken to hospital with serious leg injuries. The incident was attended by police, fire and air ambulance and the busy junction was closed for some hours.

Optare EGR options available soon

Optare Group will have a Euro 4 Solo incorporating EGR emissions technology available for demonstration very shortly.

Earlier this year the company expressed concerns that both its traditional power unit suppliers, Mercedes-Benz and Cummins, would only offer units equipped with selective catalytic reduction (SCR). The company felt it could lead to a potential loss of custom should customers wish to opt for a vehicle equipped with exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) instead.

Sales director Chris Wise said: "Since we began making enquiries and talking to customers about offering EGR power units from MAN we have had a very strong response. In fact we have taken a number of orders already, although we can't officially announce how many or who we have sold them to.

"We will still maintain the Mercedes engines in the entry level vehicles because they have proved very reliable and good on fuel. It's a very solid driveline and highly popular with customers. For those seeking options we know operators prefer the reliability of six cylinder engines and so the Cummins ISBe6 is to remain and is joined by a six cylinder MAN to give them the choice between the two technologies.

"The MAN option does include a few minor changes. It still couples to the traditional Allison gearbox but we have had to introduce a new cooling pack and a few detailed changes to accommodate the installation. The first MAN-powered Solo is virtually ready now and will be on the road doing the rounds as a demonstrator in the next few weeks." Contact Optare on 0870 033 0005.

Briefly

JMP Consulting has revealed it was behind figures showing a huge gap in per capita public transport spending between London and the city regions, evidence used by the PTE's at the Transport Select Committee hearings. JMP says spending has grown from being 70% higher in London than in the North/ West Midlands five years ago, to 160% higher in London now. The report was commissioned by PTEG.

Bristol operator Eurotaxis has decided to drop nine bus services, just three months after winning the tender. "This is nothing to do with the other business," says Eurotaxis boss Juan Sanzo. "It is just that these routes have been found to not be economically viable. We will still be running other services."

Brighton and Hove Bus Company boss Roger French came in for a roasting in the local press during the recent heatwave for insisting that drivers continue to wear standard-issue nylon trousers while on duty. "We have certain standards and I do not believe shorts are appropriate, despite the weather," he told *The Argus*.

Five people were injured at the weekend when an Arriva decker apparently took a wrong turn and hit a low bridge. Witnesses say the top was sliced off 'inches' from people's heads. The injured suffered only cuts and bruises. Three Cleveland police detectives were traveling in a car behind. The X61 service was on a day trip to Scarborough from Middlesbrough.

TfL is using what it describes as a revolutionary new road treatment to cut down on maintenance on the Hogarth Flyover. Rhinophalt, made by ASI Solutions, aims to cut the six weekly maintenance cycle on the busy road, built 40 years ago as a temporary one-way bridge. The preservative forms a membrane that becomes an integral part of the asphalt surface.

COACHES

Courtney Coaches launches new biofuels business

Soya oil means big savings, says operator

Courtney Coaches boss Bill Courtney-Smith says operators converting to biofuels could slash their annual fuels bills by hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The company is so keen on the new technology it has become an agent for supply equipment manufacturer, Regenertec, and can retrofit most vehicles at its premises in Bracknell.

The company has already converted one vehicle (a Volvo B7L) for Hunts of Alford, and is currently converting an Optare Excel bus for the company. Regenertec offers a complete warranty against engine damage caused by use of the fuel or its equipment.

Soya oil is currently costing Courtney Coaches 66.5p/litre due to a strike in Rotterdam. Normally the fuel costs under 60p/litre, a price it is expected to regain when the dispute is resolved. The firm has an agreement that means the price of soya oil tracks the price of diesel, meaning it always costs around 15p less per litre.

Having run trials, Mr Courtney-Smith says there is no noticeable power loss, and that fuel consumption gains around 8%.

As part of the conversion, Courtney Coaches installs another fuel tank. Diesel is still used at startup, as vegetable oil is too thick when cold. The fuel supply can be switched at any time and the fuelling equipment is also interchangeable between vehicles.

Using the fuel is not only cheaper, it is carbon-neutral - a handy marketing tool - and non-corrosive to engine internals. The cost to convert most vehicles is around £3,500.

Courtney Coaches is now running seven vehicles on 95% soya oil, the rest being made up of additives to, among other things, take away the 'chip shop' smell often associated with biofuel vehicles.

Soya oil fan: Bill Courtney-Smith

New coach park: Carmarthen's stunning new facility

Council takes *CBW* advice

After stinging criticism over its lack of provision for coach operators in a previous edition of *CBW*, Carmarthen Council has unveiled a brand new purpose-built coach park.

Set in the shadow of a hi-tec new footbridge linking the adjacent railway station to the town centre, the 16-space facility does not have an attendant, but is monitored by CCTV, and costs £5 per day.

Council spokesman, Alex Side, says: "*CBW*'s comments were fair enough at the time, but in Carmarthen we now have an all-singing, all-dancing coach park and we want to make sure operators know about it."

CPT says use 'em or lose 'em

The CPT has issued a 'use-it or lose-it' call to operators over new coach parking spaces in Central London.

Westminster City Council has responded to lobbying by the CPT and the Society of London Theatre by creating new coach bays on the Strand (two places), Russell Street and Covent Garden (four) and Kinsgway (15). But, as yet, the bays are woefully underused.

Bob Pilbeam of CPT said: "We have worked hard to get these bays and Westminster City Council came up trumps. The problem is that coach drivers are only using the Strand bays so the problems of setting down and picking up that we were trying to sort out still remain. I am worried that if drivers don't use the other sites, Westminster will get fed up and will suspend them. What is more it could affect Westminster's decision as to whether to go ahead with providing new bays in Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road and others in Victoria. The message is quite clear – use them or lose them."

The locations of these and others can be found on The London Coach Park Map, The London Theatre Coach Map and on TfL's web site *www.tfl.gov.uk/coachparking*.

CPT "hopeful" on Portsmouth charges after talks with council

Representatives from CPT, National Express and Lucketts Travel met with officers from Portsmouth City Council last week to discuss the newly-introduced charges to The Hard Interchange in Portsmouth.

Charges of between £2.50-£3 per visit came into effect in July despite there being no consultation with the industry.

CPT's head of coach services, Allan Edmondson, who attended the meeting, said: "The council has acknowledged that more could have been done to engage with the industry before charges were implemented. We had a very useful discussion, at the invitation of the council, and we are hopeful that a revised scheme will be possible, and more helpful to the industry."

The CPT says that the charges are unlikely to be cancelled completely, but that the council will effectively undertake a "retrospective" consultation which should result in a better deal for operators. Both parties hope to make an announcement by the end of August.

OFT allows NatEx to slash fares

NatEx has been allowed to slash ticket prices on its Heathrow-London services after the OFT accepted the removal of price controls on the firm's Stansted-London service.

The strange situation arose out of the NatEx Group's purchase of Prism Rail, operator of the Stansted-London franchise in 2000.

Because National Express then had a dominant position on the Stansted-London route, operating both coach and rail services, the OFT ruled that restrictions should be placed on ticket prices between the two destinations.

It decided to index the London-Stansted service with the similar Heathrow-London service the company also operated. This meant that NatEx's Stansted coach prices were capped at a level no higher than the equivalent fares on its London-Heathrow coach service.

But the market changed in two ways since the undertakings were set out: demand at Stansted has outstripped demand at Heathrow, and NatEx has withdrawn its dedicated London-Heathrow service since the increased competition from other modes of transport made it uneconomic.

However, NatEx continued to operate services that called at Heathrow en route to central London, and wanted to cut the ticket price on this route to make it more attractive to passengers. But it was prevented from doing this because a corresponding cut in the ticket price on the Stansted service would have made that service uneconomic.

NatEx applied to the OFT to have the undertakings removed on the basis that consumers' interests were being damaged by not being able to buy cheaper tickets between Heathrow and London.

The OFT accepted NatEx's argument. It says it considered a different form of price control on the Stansted route but that "no alternative undertaking reasonably open to it would have a restorative effect on competition". However, NatEx must maintain services between London and Stansted at set fares and frequencies.

Distinctive tiger livery adorns Z&S International's latest addition to its fleet – a Volvo B7R Sunsundegui Sideral

Tiger eyes on Volvo

Aylesbury-based Z & S International has just taken delivery of a new Volvo B7R Sunsundegui Sideral as it moves towards a 100% Volvo fleet.

The new vehicle, with a driveline combination of Volvo's D7C 275 bhp engine coupled to a six speed ZF automatic gearbox, has 57 seats – all with three-point belts – and full air conditioning.

The vehicle features Z & S's distinctive tiger decals and will be used for private hire work, including a number of school run contracts, throughout the UK and into Europe.

The company, whose initials Z & S stand for Zaman and Son, opted for the B7R because its high capacity makes it particularly appealing to groups.

Having specialised in private hire for over 20 years, Z & S has always run a mixed fleet, but is now in the process of converting the entire 13-strong fleet to Volvo.

As Mr Zaman, explained: "We do all our own maintenance and it makes sense for our workshop to become familiar with one brand. Volvo has always proved very reliable and our passengers have been consistently happy with them, so it was an easy choice to make."

PG9 for no engine cut-off cancelled

A Cambridgeshire operator is fuming after his 2005 touring coach was issued with a PG9 while in Bournemouth.

The prohibition was for the lack of an engine cut-off switch, but the issuing officer wasn't aware that the near-new Van Hool Astron was never fitted with one - and doesn't need one.

"It is type approved under EC2001/85, and doesn't have one," said managing director, Peter Fenn. "I spoke to the issuing officer, who said he wasn't aware of the regulation."

After the call, the officer agreed that the PG9 was erroneously issued.

"He said 'Swansea never tell us about this kind of thing'," said Mr Fenn. "But surely it's his job to find out?"

CPT off to IoW

The CPT met Isle of Wight councillors last week to help repair damage done by remarks made by Cllr Andy Sutton earlier in the year.

Bob Pilbeam and a representative from Shearings met councillors to discuss improved coach facilities on the island, including set-down and pick-up places.

Mr Pilbeam says he was pleased by the "extremely encouraging" reaction from the council to his proposals.

Briefly

Five people were taken to hospital with minor injuries last week after a coach carrying schoolchildren collided with a fire engine in Clacton town centre.
The coach was hired by the London charity, Community Links, and was returning home after a seaside day trip. Nobody at Community Links was available for comment.
The driver, four of the children and one of the fire crew suffered minor injuries and were taken to hospital as a precaution. A fire service spokesman says a full investigation will be carried out.

New member states' entry into the EU's Schengen borderless zone could be delayed by up to six months. The European Commission said the SIS II border control computer system would not be up and running until late in 2007. But EU diplomats have privately blamed commission officials for incompetence.

A group of sixth formers on a school trip were lucky to escape injury after their minibus overturned in the Lake District. The Peugeot minibus rolled back, hit a rock and then flipped onto its side. The bus came to a rest on a sharp bend and blocked the road for four hours.

American Megabus.com has added a stop at Toledo on its Cleveland-Chicago route after monitoring internet inquiries. The company has now carried almost 100,000 passengers since services started in May.

An air ambulance was called after a minibus carrying 10 people crashed on the Scottish borders at the weekend. One person was cut free from the wreckage, although no serious injuries were reported. The accident happened on the M74 near Annan, Dumfrieshire, on Sunday morning.

TOUR

Briefly

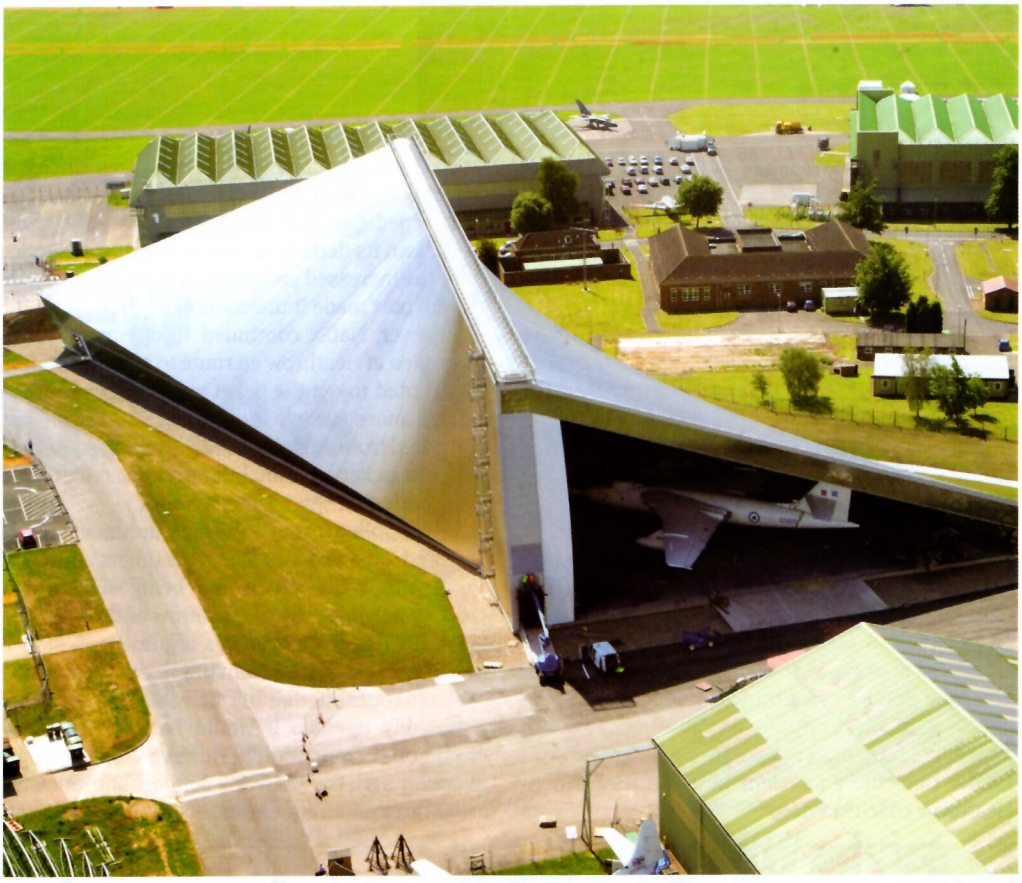
VisitScotland is hoping to get Hollywood A-listers to help promote the country as a tourist destination. When the stars arrive in Edinburgh for the international film festival later this year, PR teams will ask the celebrities for endorsements on the VisitScotland website. A spokesman for the tourist board said: "There is no doubt that celebrities visiting Scotland is good news for tourism here."

The Tories have launched a campaign to prevent the introduction of a 'bed tax' on accommodation in England. Shadow ministers visited Brighton and Bournemouth last week to unveil their "Save the Great British holiday" campaign in protest against the controversial government plans. It is claimed the planned levy on hotels could add £100 a week to the cost of a domestic holiday.

Malmaison in Oxford has been voted second in a list of the most quirky hotels in the world. The hotel is set inside an old prison and is authentic enough to make guests feel as though they are incarcerated, but management assures the property was renovated to ensure more comfortable accommodation is provided. Visit *www.malmaison-oxford.com* for pictures.

TNS, the leading provider of information to British tourism boards, has launched an online panel to gauge the opinions of thousands of travellers. TNS said its panel will allow access to 500,000 respondents across Europe, which will provide companies in the industry with a critical insight into identifying their target markets.

The travel industry must do more to ensure holidaymakers are not left high and dry when it comes to claiming on their travel insurance. The Treasury is to launch a probe into the industry shortly, and could conclude that self-regulation is the best way forward.



Artist's impression: Stunning setting for the new Cold War exhibition

Cold War comes to Shropshire

A futuristic glass and steel structure that soars above the Shropshire countryside will shortly become the home of the national Cold War exhibition at Cosford's RAF Museum.

Visitors will be able to walk among the aircraft, missiles, warheads and armoured vehicles that were part of the chilling dispute that brought the world closer to nuclear war than ever before.

Three British V-bombers - the Valiant, the Victor and the Vulcan - will be among the exhibits housed in two spectacular triangular buildings, symbolically separated by a central walkway dividing east and west.

Also in the 7,000m² buildings will be 21 interactive stations including information on Berlin as a Cold War flashpoint, the space race, the arms race, the Cuban missile crisis, the anti-nuclear protests of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, and sport and the arts.

Nineteen aircraft will be housed in the buildings, including some being moved from existing parts of Cosford. Others will be transported from the RAF museum's London base. Non-RAF aircraft will also be on display, including an American F111 swing-wing bomber and a MiG15, a craft which caused many to look to the sky in amazement in Europe in the 1940s.

There will also be disarmed nuclear missiles, a Centurion tank and an Opel Senator sedan car, especially adapted for espionage purposes.

The exhibition, financed in part by the lottery fund, will also contain two classrooms when the project opens in spring next year.

Other exhibits at RAF Cosford include over 60 historic aircraft. The museum has an extensive programme of activities and is free to enter.

■ For more information visit *www.rafmuseum.org.uk* or phone 01902 376200.

HOLIDAY POUND

£1 will get you:	
Euro	**1.47**
Switzerland *(Franc)*	**2.31**
Norway *(Kroner)*	**11.54**
Hungary *(Forint)*	**400.90**
Czech Republic *(Koruna)*	**41.70**
Poland *(Zloty)*	**5.76**

DIESEL PRICES

Cost per litre in pence:	
Great Britain	**99.10**
Norway	**96.08**
Italy	**88.62**
Sweden	**88.87**
Germany	**81.65**
Netherlands	**79.66**
Belgium	**79.16**
Switzerland	**80.86**
France	**78.09**
Ireland	**79.94**
Portugal	**77.38**
Austria	**74.32**
Hungary	**73.87**
Czech Republic	**74.75**
Poland	**69.92**
Spain	**65.36**
Luxembourg	**68.56**

Thrill of the Chase

In the heart of Staffordshire, visitors will discover accessible countryside and a wide variety of tourism and leisure amenities to suit all ages in Cannock Chase District.

Situated just north of the West Midlands conurbation, the district extends from the A5 and Little Wyrley in the south, to the River Trent and Rugeley in the north.

At its heart lies the majestic woodlands, valleys and heathland of Cannock Chase, an internationally acclaimed area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Chase is one of the region's most popular beauty spots; attracting walkers, mountain bikers, naturalists and picnickers.

The visitor centre at Marquis Drive, the starting point for several self-guided walking and family cycling routes, and the Forestry Commission's Birches Valley forest centre, with an adventure play area, deer dash and hedgehog hike trails, both provide a fascinating insight into the changing seasons and wildlife on the Chase. The county ranger service also organises guided walks and other events.

Using the Chase as a base for a short break or a day out, visitors will discover that there is a great deal going on within a short distance.

Cannock, on the southern edge of the Chase is one of the most cosmopolitan towns in the area. A combination of high-quality shopping malls and a traditional market offer a wide variety of choice to the discerning shopper.

The district has five major parks - Heath Hayes Park; Ravenhill Park, Brereton; Elmore Park, Rugeley; Cannock Park and Hednesford Park - each of which includes a children's play area and floral beds.

Cannock Chase District is also the ideal location for exploring the tourism and leisure attractions elsewhere in Staffordshire and within the wider West Midlands region.

In and around the district, a variety of hotels and guesthouses, together with self-catering accommodation and camp sites, all provide a warm welcome and a relaxing location.

■ For more information contact Cannock Chase information centre on 01543 464523/464226. The web-site *www.cannock-chase.co.uk* includes a useful diary section detailing forthcoming events.

Cannock Chase: This picturesque area of Staffordshire has something for everybody to explore

Experts predict Sofia will be a hotspot for visitors in 2007

Travellers choose Bulgaria

Bulgaria has been named as the up-and-coming tourist destination of 2007, according to online travel company Opodo.

The firm produced a top ten list of countries which its experts predict will see a rise in visitor numbers by this time next year and Bulgaria, the only European nation to make the list, was put at number one.

Opodo's UK manager, Neil Mott, said: "2006 has seen a strong rise in travel to Eastern European countries since, while still being accessible, they still hold a certain mystique for the traveller.

"Bookings to Bulgaria have risen by 40% in the last six months and with the prospect of joining the European Union in January, we expect to see a significant increase in the number of tourists heading there."

Also in the top ten was Morocco, due to fast-dropping flight prices, Australia, as the industry expects fierce competition among airlines once the Airbus A380 is in service, and China, as visitors begin to be lured by the Olympics in 2008.

DEALS OF THE WEEK

■ **Muncaster Castle in Cumbria has cut 15% off the price of entry into the castle and gardens for group visits of more than 15 people. When booking, a coach parking space will be automatically reserved and a host will be assigned to welcome the group. Drivers receive a free meal voucher worth £10. Pre-booking is essential to receive the discount. For information, call 01229 717614.**

■ **The Designer Outlet in York is giving '10% off' discount cards to all visitors who travel in groups of 20 or more. The coach driver and group organiser will also receive a meal voucher. To receive the special group offers, bookings must be made at least 48 hours in advance. For information call 01904 682720 or visit *www.yorkdesigneroutlet.com***

■ **Groups of 10 or more attending the Windsor Show between September 19 and October 1 can now receive a 10% booking discount for all tickets purchased more than 24 hours before the first day. The festival attracts distinguished artists from around the world to the famous grounds of Windsor Castle. For more information contact the box office on 01753 740121**

Groups go cheap at Muncaster Castle

The digital

tachograph headache.

Here's some relief.

Many people are postponing the purchase of coaches with digital tachographs.

There are many seemingly valid reasons. The hassle. The driver training. And, of course, the cost.

To ease the pain, we're providing familiarisation courses for drivers and managers. We're even training the training instructors of large fleets.

But most important, we're helping with the cost.

We have a limited stock of Euro 3 coaches available for immediate delivery.

Should you buy one of these, we'll supply - free of charge - the necessary equipment and driver training required to comply with the digital tachograph system.

That might not cure all your headaches. But it could provide some pain relief.

For more information contact Bob Nevitt on 07974 403311

SCANIA
Peace of mind™

GAZ buys LDV Group

Russian automotive manufacturer GAZ Group has acquired Birmingham van maker LDV Group from an affiliate of Sun European Partners, LLP. The price is undisclosed, but according to the *Financial Times* GAZ paid £50m, and will invest a further £100m.

With immediate effect, Martin Leach, right, a former president of Ford Europe, and chief executive of Maserati, will become chairman of LDV. Steve Young, former head of the Automotive Practice of the global management consultants AT Kearney, following an earlier career with British Leyland and Ford, will become chief executive.

GAZ, 80% owned by Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, has the stated aim of becoming a leading player in the global market for light commercial vehicles and LDV's award-winning Maxus panel van range will spearhead the company's new expansion plans.

Production at the Birmingham plant will be ramped up by adding new - as yet unspecified - product lines, and entering new markets in the EU and further afield.

It also plans to launch production Maxus at its plant in Russia, with a view to beginning distribution of the vehicles across the Russian and CIS markets.

LDV currently has an annual turnover of £140m and exports vehicles to Europe, the Middle East and to the Asian Pacific rim. It employs around 850 people producing 10,000 vehicles per year. The group also includes Birmingham Pressings, a stampings business producing body panels and sub-assemblies for LDV and external clients.

GAZ is also establishing a new company dedicated to identifying international expansion

opportunities. GAZ International will be based in the UK and focus on acquiring new technologies, entering into strategic alliances with foreign carmakers, recruiting high-quality staff and entering new export markets. LDV will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of GAZ International, which itself will be a wholly-owned subsidiary of GAZ. Martin Leach and Steve Young will take up senior roles at GAZ International.

GAZ Group was founded last year following a restructuring of Ruspromavto, one of the largest global producers of buses and vans. The group manufactures vehicles (vans, buses, medium trucks and passenger cars), diesel engines and fuel equipment. GAZ Group turnover in 2005 was in excess of $US3.5 billion. The majority shareholder of the GAZ Group is Russian Machines Holdings, a part of the Basic Element Group.

Basic Element is a private equity fund, founded in 1997 with assets in Russia and abroad. It operates in five sectors - energy, machinery, resources, financial services, and construction and development. Group revenue amounted to over $13 billion last year.

The Toyota Formula One team Neoplan Starliner, revealed last week, has some rather nifty equipment hidden in the table tops. The integrated screens are not for the engineers to analyse race car's performance. In fact the tables contain Playstations to keep guests entertained on the way to the track. The PS3 units are stored between the back to back seats. The team Starliner has 36 seats arranged around tables, plus a five-seater 'club corner' at the back.

Olympus Coachcraft crashes

Long established Olympus Coachcraft, the Manchester-based minibus conversion specialist, has been forced to close.

Few details are available, but creditors were contacted by Salford-based accountants Crawfords at the end of July.

A spokesman for Crawfords could not confirm whether the firm would be appointed to act as the official body dealing with the affairs of Olympus Coachcraft, nor could he confirm whether the action would be for liquidation, receivership or administration.

Renowned for producing high quality, executive-style minicoaches, Olympus moved into new premises over a year ago with a view to expansion, but admitted it was experiencing problems in finding skilled staff and retaining trainees.

Briefly

Nottinghamshire is putting plans to charge for faith school transport out for public consultation. It wants to charge new primary pupils £250 a year, and secondary pupils £300 a year for transport. At the same time, the council is investigating improved travel discounts for young people in the county. The proposals are due to come into effect in the next financial year. Some 2,000 pupils are currently in receipt of free transport.

Torfaen Council in south-east Wales is asking pupils to prove their faith before allowing free travel. Torfaen's variation on the free faith school transport issue is to deny free transport to pupils with a different faith to that of their school. The council is requesting a baptism certificate as proof of faith.

GMPTA recently approved a proposal to add three new school buses to its yellow bus fleet. Two of the vehicles are destined for a new school route, while the third will be added to an existing route. There are currently 29 yellow school buses operating at 18 schools in Greater Manchester.

Children's minister Beverley Hughes has announced new measures to tackle antisocial behaviour by school pupils. Twenty local authorities will produce detailed proposals to pilot targeted support and courses for parents with children at risk of poor behaviour between the ages of 8-13.

Parents at a Roman Catholic school in Borehamwood have further eroded the expected savings of Hertfordshire's faith school policy by winning an appeal against the cuts. Children at St Teresa's RC primary school will still be able to go to secondary school in St Albans, as they have done for 40 years, and will be entitled to free transport until they are 16 years old.

OPTARE

Euro 4 - Whichever route you want to take Optare gives you the choice

Optare has always offered a choice of options in its buses and coaches. With the introduction of new emissions legislation, we're the only vehicle manufacturer offering a choice of Euro 4 engine technologies across our bus range. Other manufacturers, due to their alliances with specific chassis suppliers, will be offering either SCR or EGR emissions systems for their Euro 4 compliant vehicles, but Optare give you a choice - either Mercedes-Benz or Cummins engines which use the SCR system, or MAN engines using EGR technology. So whichever option you decide on, Optare won't force you down one route.

Optare Group, Manston Lane, Leeds, LS15 8SU Telephone 0870 033 0005 : e-mail bussales@optare.com Website www.optare.com

NORTH WEST
COACH & BUS WINDSCREENS

Coach & Bus Glass Replacement Specialists

No 1 for Coach and Bus repair and replacement!

Areas covered;

NORTH WEST ENGLAND AND SURROUNDING REGIONS

"Keeping You Moving"

Telephone: 01706 870556

24 hour mobile 07765 241 722

www.nwcoachandbus.net

Registered Office: 5 The Moorlands, Weir, Bacup, Lancashire OL13 8BT

WILL YOUR NEXT AD REACH THOUSANDS OR WASTE THOUSANDS?

The truth is, there is only one reliable way to tell if your advertisement's getting the exposure you want, for the money you spend. An ABC Certificate of Circulation provides an independently verified circulation figure. If a publication has one, you can use the figures for planning your advertising. Assessing value for money. And generally getting the most out of your advertising budget.
Visit **www.abc.org.uk**

ABC
Adding value to your business

Call EvoBus UK Tel: 02476 626046

1999 Neoplan N516 Starliner

Beautifully presented corporate hospitality vehicle with 42/46 reclining seats, astronic, a/c, webasto, retarder, rear wc & servery with microwave.

1996 Setra S250 Special

48 recliners, webasto, retarder, centre sunken washroom, a/c, tv/video, crew seat, belts, 8 speed transmission

1998 Volvo B10M Plaxton Premier 350

53 seats, newly re-trimmed, crew seat, belts, manual 6 speed transmission, radio/cassette, tv/video

Call Julie or John NOW

to arrange a demonstration on any vehicle in stock

EvoBus UK
Cross Point Business Park, Coventry CV2 2TU

OMNIplus
Services for your Mercedes-Benz and Setra

Tel: 02476 626000
Web: www.evobus.co.uk

Underlining the political currency to be gained from environmentally-friendly technology in the US at the moment, New York senator Hillary Clinton turned out for the launch of four new Orion VII hybrid-electric buses in Westchester County last week. "It is a significant step for Westchester County to ease off the dependence of foreign oil and utilise new technologies that increase fuel efficiency," she said. The Orion VII diesel-electric hybrid claims 90% less particulate matter, 40% less NOx, 25% less CO2 emissions and a 30% increase in fuel economy. The vehicles are manufactured at the Oriskany plant in New York State. The HybriDrive propulsion system is produced by Johnson City, New York-based BAE Systems.

PHOTOS: DAIMLERCHRYSLER COMMERCIAL BUSES NORTH AMERICA/ BAE SYSTEMS.

Sun Metro Mass Transit Department of El Paso, Texas, has ordered 35 40ft lowfloor buses from North American Bus Industries (NABI). Fuelled by compressed natural gas (CNG), they will replace a 15-year-old fleet of standard-floor diesel buses. The contract is worth US $14 million, with delivery due in March 2007. The 40-LFW buses are wheelchair accessible, with electronically-controlled interior lighting, two-toned flooring for the visually impaired and all-round exterior electronic destination signs.

Dusseldorf PTA orders Hydrogenics fuel cell

Hydrogenics Corporation, a specialist designer and manufacturer of hydrogen and fuel cell systems, has received a US $460,000 order for a fuel cell hybrid midibus from Rheinbahn Rheinische Bahngesellschaft AG, the public transit authority for Dusseldorf, Germany.

Hydrogenics will install a HyPM based fuel cell hybrid power-plant into a Tecnobus Gulliver electric midibus platform. The hybrid design allows a range of 200 km on one tank of hydrogen, compared to 60 to 80 km from lead-acid batteries alone.

The vehicle is claimed to be ideal for transit applications in urban centres.

The fuel cell hybrid design overcomes the main shortcomings of battery power as batteries must be exchanged normally twice per daily cycle, along with the associated operational down-time to do so. Batteries also give off emissions during recharging, and must be replaced every three to five years, requiring special disposal and recycling procedures due to the toxic content.

Hybrid systems are also claimed to be more cost-effective than power-trains powered solely by hydrogen fuel cells.

Ballard makes progress in China

Ballard Power Systems of Vancouver has signed a memorandum of understanding and fuel cell supply agreement with Shanghai Fuel Cell Vehicle Powertrain. Demonstration and field trial programmes are planned over the next two years.

Under the terms of the agreement, Ballard will supply fuel cells and related services and Powertrain will integrate those fuel cells into vehicles.

"We believe China could be a key market driving the commercialisation of automotive fuel cell technology, and, as such, we are very pleased to announce this next step in our ongoing activities in China," said Noordin Nanji, Ballard's vice-president.

As a first step, Ballard and Powertrain have signed an agreement for up to 20 Mark 902 automotive fuel cells. Ballard will ship two units to Powertrain for integration into vehicles later this year and will also provide related applications, engineering and field service support. Upon successful integration of the fuel cells into vehicles, Powertrain will purchase 18 more fuel cells in 2007.

■ The Shanghai government recently announced funding for a programme that will introduce 100 fuel cell vehicles to the road by the end of 2007. This is the first phase of a program that will see 1,000 vehicles on the road by 2009-2010, and 10,000 by 2011-2012. Ballard is also a participant in the Beijing fuel cell bus demonstration programme, launched in 2005.

Briefly

Cummins Turbo Technologies, formerly Holset Turbochargers, has officially opened its newest factory in Charleston, USA. The new 110,000ft² plant will make turbochargers for heavy-duty engines and will complement the firm's other factory in Charleston. It cost US $13m and will see 180 people build 200,000 turbochargers a year. Cummins has its HQ in Huddersfield and is one of the world's largest manufacturers of turbochargers for diesel engines.

Scania has appointed a new chief financial officer. Jan Ytterberg, 45, will also join the company's executive board. An expert in business administration and economics, he is currently senior vice-president corporate control, and a member of the Scania Group management team. He joined Scania in 1987 as a trainee and took up his first management position in 1991. Prior to his current position, Mr Ytterberg was finance director of Scania Latin America between 2002 and 2004.

The Hino fuel cell bus trialled at the Central Japan International Airport has been put into permanent service. The trial started in March with a Toyota/Hino Motors FCHV-BUS. The project is organised by the Japanese Ministry of Trade. The Japan Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Demonstration Project (JHFC) provides manufacturers with data necessary for the commercialisation of fuel cell hybrid buses.

A coach carrying 40 elderly French tourists toppled into a ditch by a motorway in central Norway last week after passengers persuaded the driver to get closer to a moose grazing by the roadside so they could take photos. In doing so, the coach dropped off the edge of the motorway. One woman received minor injuries.

Regional News

CBW takes a look at the big issues where you live in our round-up of the regions. If you've got a local issue you would like us to cover, contact Andrew Peace at *andrew.peace@rouncymedia.co.uk*

REP. IRELAND

Galway City Council is pressing ahead with plans to construct a 700-vehicle Park and Ride site as part of plans to expand "Green Route" public transport priority routes and services, and seeking an operator to manage the site and operate the bus services. The facility is to be constructed on a site located adjacent to the N18 Oranmore to Claregalway Road, approximately 0.5km north of the Carrowmoneash Roundabout.

Contractors are expected to be appointed for the construction of the site as well as surrounding roadways and services within the next few months. The site is expected to be operational by 2008.

Meanwhile the city council is inviting tenders for the provision of the Park and Ride bus service and management and operation of the site.The initial contract period will be for three years, with an option for the city council to extend this by a further two years.

The deadline for bids is September 11.

NORTH

Newcastle's glass-roofed Haymarket bus station has reopened just over two weeks after falling glass injured a passenger.

A Health and Safety inspection last Wednesday found the extra sheeting installed to catch broken glass should prevent the problem from reoccurring. The council, however, is offering no guarantees.

Newcastle City Council spokesman Peter Wightman said: "We've had a series of breakages and the sheeting system has worked for the most part very well. In this most recent case the glass slipped around the edges.

"It can never be 100% guaranteed, but we've consulted Health and Safety experts and it's the best we can put into operation at the moment."

Investigations are still underway to establish why the glass smashed, although the recent hot weather is suspected. The roof has suffered 20 reported similar incidents in the past five years.

LONDON

Another **Stagecoach** vehicle was involved in a dramatic incident in London last week. Police are looking for a gang of youths caught on CCTV acting suspiciously shortly before the Stagecoach in London-operated 196 bus burst into flames alongside houses on Dartford Road.

The heat from the blaze, which started on the top deck, buckled window frames and melted doors and guttering.

The youths boarded the bus at Bexleyheath Clocktower and disembarked shortly before the fire was spotted. One resident heard the boys shouting that they had "torched" the bus.

Eyewitness Richard Goslitska said: "At first I thought there had been a terrorist attack. The smoke was billowing into the nearby flats. It looked like there was 200ft of flames coming from the top floor."

A Stagecoach spokesman said: "Due to the driver's quick thinking everybody got off the bus safely. This is another damaged bus.

"In my day it was peashooters and knock down ginger, but now they get their kicks from setting fire to buses. I don't know what is happening to the world."

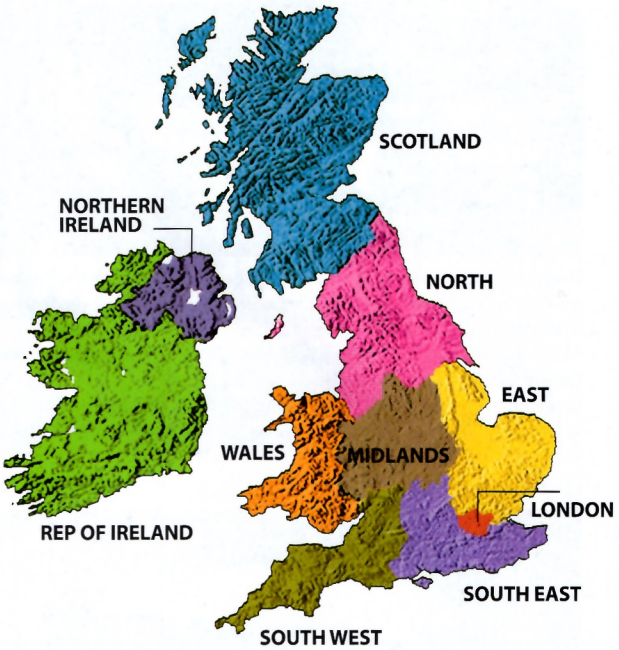
Damage to the bus has been estimated at £50,000 and damage to the houses is thought to be £20,000.

Another spectacular blaze, on London United's 57 bus in Kingston last Friday, drew a crowd of over 100 people, according to local press reports.

A spokesman for the company said it was still waiting to establish the cause of the fire. Initial reports suggest a fuel leak was to blame.

Twenty-five passengers aboard were safely evacuated. There was some minor damage to a nearby garage. The crowd was kept entertained by a series of small explosions as the tyres and other components caught fire.

The road was closed, causing delays of up to 80 minutes.



Drivers at Gretton's Coaches of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, have raised an amazing £3,200 for the British Heart Foundation after a 50-mile sponsored cycle ride, and the figure looks set to rise even further. Fifteen drivers took part in the ride, from Peterborough to Hunstanton on the Norfolk coast.

SOUTH WEST

Police in **Cheltenham** have arrested two teenagers after a bus was taken from a Stagecoach depot and crashed into fencing and bollards. Four teenagers were believed to have been involved in the theft. They put their bikes on the single deck bus before speeding off,

Briefly

A passenger suffered serious injuries and five people were arrested after a minibus overturned in Worcestershire last Thursday. Four passengers were arrested under suspicion of immigration offences, while the driver was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving. The accident happened at 5.30am, on the B4088 near the village of Harvington.

Centro-PTA has established a new open users group to tackle public transport issues in Dudley. The group replaces the transport Users' Advisory Committee (TUAC) which only allowed members of the public to speak at defined times during meetings.

Briefly

Potential users of a night bus trial in Swindon are being warned to 'use it or lose it' by councillors. The Stagecoach-operated service has carried over 450 passengers in its first four weeks of operation, but unless numbers improve the service will not survive beyond the end of September. The buses run on three routes and leave every 45 minutes from 12.30am until 3.30am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Teenage louts are blamed for the second axing of a late night service in Cambridge. The service was originally cut in 2004 after repeated vandalism, but returned this year after lobbying from residents. The council says it had to withdraw the service, operated by Huntingdon and District, because of regular attacks by stone-throwing youths.

Disabled campaigners in Scotland are protesting at the lack of information on accessible bus services. ECAS – the Edinburgh Cripple Aid Society – says disabled people find it difficult to plan trips because bus companies cannot tell them in advance which services will use low floor vehicles.

Cornish independent Western Greyhound has launched a new express coach service between Exeter and Newquay to replace services withdrawn by First Devon and Cornwall. The move is being supported by both Cornwall and Devon county councils. Mark Howarth, Western Greyhound's managing director, says: "We have taken the opportunity to not only fill the gaps left by First but to create a new service from Newquay to Exeter. We see it as a gap in the network and many isolated villages will regain a bus service." North Cornwall MP Dan Rogerson said: "Western Greyhound has acted on the requests from the public. This will be a boost to tourism, a lifeline for those who do not own a car and great news for everyone in the area."

early last Wednesday. After the crash the thieves escaped on their bikes. Police arrested a 16-year-old boy and a 17-year-old girl.

SOUTH EAST

An **Essex** police swoop on limousines in June and July was timed to coincide with the school prom season.

Officers have now released details of the operation in Thurrock, Rayleigh, Southend and Chelmsford in which 70 drivers and operators were found to have defective vehicles or queries over their licences or insurance.

Six vehicles were seized immediately. Operators had 14 days to provide the necessary documents. Police warned parents in the area to make sure that vehicles were registered with the local authority before hiring.

One of the traffic investigators involved in the checks said: "Parents assume the drivers have been checked under the Criminal Records Bureau. This operation highlighted that many drivers have not got the correct insurance and some of the drivers have been discovered to be driving on a normal car licence and not the necessary PSV category that is required to carry more than eight passengers.

"Some operators do licence their limousines and drivers, but many others do not comply with the law and passengers are put at serious risk as a result."

■ **Hampshire County Council** is slashing £200,000 from its public transport subsidy to help balance its £5.4m budget. Cutting back the number 10 Basingstoke-Winchester bus service will save £64,000. Currently the council pays over £5 per passenger journey on the Monday to Saturday service - operated by **Countrywide Travel** and used by 17,000 passengers per year - twice its recommended limit of £2.50. The number 10 is one of eight routes to be affected.

■ At the same time, HCC has just finished consulting on a new Park and Ride site for south **Winchester**. It hopes the 800-space car park will reduce congestion in the area by 8-12%. It should open in spring 2009. For the longer term, it is considering more P&Rs on the other main approaches to the city. HCC has also launched a new website for its ZIP priority bus corridor, operated in conjunction with First Bus. The website provides a clickable route map, and timetable information - *www.hants.gov.uk/a3buscorridor/*.

■ Sainsbury's supermarket has offered to part-fund a route recently dropped by Bournemouth's **Yellow Buses**. Local operator R&N Travel is in talks with the council about adding an extra journey to a proposed school route, at a cost of £40,000. Residents had petitioned the council to get the route reinstated.

Roadworks

M25 Surrey
Until October 31: Roadworks between J8 and J10.

M20 Kent
Until November 1: 50mph restriction around J4 (A228).

M1 North London
Current: Roadworks between J1 and J2.

M25 Waltham Abbey
Until December 31: 40mph between J25 (A10) and J26 (A121); sliproads closed at J25.

M10 Hertfordshire
Until August 16: Night roadworks between J1 and J7

M1 Hertfordshire
Until December 31, 2008: Speed restriction both ways between J8 and J10.

M11 Cambridgeshire
Current: Roadworks between J9 and J10.

M4 Wiltshire
Until December 21: Roadworks between J16 and J17.

M4 Bristol
Until November 30: Roadworks between J18 and J19 (M32).

M62 Merseyside
Current: Roadworks at J4 (A5080) and J21(A640)

M60 Greater Manchester
Current: Roadworks between J22 (A62) and J23 (A635).

M6 Lancashire
Current: Roadworks between J35 (A601) and J36 (A590).

M8 Glasgow
Current: Roadworks between J4 to J5, J9 to J10 and J22 to J24.

M90 Fife
Until August 21: Roadworks at J3 (A92).

M9 Edinburgh
Until December 21: Roadworks and 40mph around J1A.

In association with
trafficlink
www.trafficlink.co.uk

Welsh operator gets final warning

Traffic commissioner not persuaded by suggestions that kids caused Humphreys Coaches' problem

A coach company's fleet was cut by half after an inspector found seatbelts faulty in four school buses.

Humphreys Coaches, based in Pontypridd, South Wales, had its operating licence reduced from 10 vehicles to five. Company director Peter Ryan, 52, and transport manager Chris Franklin, 40, were told to "sharpen up their act" after failing more than half their inspections in the last two years.

What the examiner said

Inspector, Paul Davies, found many of their seatbelts were faulty, as well as problems with brakes and tyres.

One seatbelt was in such a state of disrepair it was given an 'S' rating - which means there was a significant failure in its maintenance.

The inquiry in Cardiff heard drivers were not carrying out their checks to the proper standard in the morning before heading off to pick up schoolchildren and faults were going unnoticed.

On the most recent surprise inspection in October last year, four of the seven vehicles the company owned were taken off the road because of maintenance failures.

Other problems included a cracked windscreen, a washer not working, a leaking exhaust, a door catching and an engine stop that wasn't working.

The hearing was told Humphreys Coaches ran a number of contracts for local schools and had problems with seats being damaged by unruly children.

What the traffic commissioner said

Paul Callis, defending the firm, said: "Carrying children can be a hard job - they seem to take pleasure in damaging, twisting and cutting seatbelts."

But traffic commissioner, David Dixon, told them that if they chose to take school contracts they had to make sure the buses were safe. He said: "While problems with seatbelts may result from school contracts, it is the job of the operators, if they choose to take school contracts, to make sure that the seatbelts are in good order."

He told Mr Ryan and Mr Franklin, who had both previously owned PSV licences, that they should not have made the mistakes they did with the experience they had.

He told them: "There have been 11 prohibitions in the past two years for 20 checks on your vehicles.

"Mr Davies examined four vehicles when he first called on you and found three were unsatisfactory.

"He then told you he was going to return two days later to check three more. When he did, he found another coach which was 'S' marked.

> It is remarkable that you knew he was coming but still didn't make sure all the coaches were in a good condition

"It is remarkable that you knew he was coming but still didn't make sure all the coaches were in a good condition. That shows a remarkable lack of concern.

"There were 29 defects on your vehicles - an average of more than four for each vehicle. From a passenger's point of view, they were extremely dangerous.

"Your maintenance records were a total mess and some of them were not complete. The approach to this business was completely lackadaisical.

"What you both need to do is sharpen up your act - you've both run PSVs before and you should be capable of this. But as it stands, I'm not entirely convinced you can. What I'm going to do is give you one last chance."

Mr Davies said a third of all the defects found should have been noticed by drivers doing their morning checks.

The company's fitter, Jason Bishop, was not carrying out enough checks on the vehicles even though he knew they needed to be done. It appeared that Mr Bishop had too much work to handle.

Mr Davies said: "He knew the checks were due, because he had filled in the relevant sheets, but had not told anyone they needed doing.

"If he had too much to do you would have expected he would tell the business. He had the facilities and he should have done a better job."

The court heard Mr Bishop had taken over as the company's only fitter after the previous fitter, James Warlock, left for "greener pastures".

But a month after the third surprise inspection and subsequent prohibition orders, Mr Bishop failed to turn up for work and Mr Warlock returned. The company had since employed another fitter to share the workload.

This fitter, Aled Jones, was accompanying the drivers when they did their early morning inspections on the 20-year-old fleet.

The hearing, in Cardiff County Court, heard Humphreys had obtained contracts with a local tyre company and mechanics to ensure their standards were satisfactory.

Mr Franklin also said he would play a more active role in making sure inspections were done to a high standard and that problems were investigated.

Since the surprise inspections, the company had done two annual inspections - and had passed both. The hearing was also told that drivers had been carrying out repairs without logging them in the books.

The company will still be able to run the three contracts they had obtained for the summer for bingo runs and playgroup trips.

Key points

- Seatbelts were the cause of many PG9s, but other faults surfaced at inspection
- Operator blamed schoolchildren for damaging seatbelts
- Traffic commissioner says the fact that a vehicle failed a check showed a lack of concern for its condition
- He said drivers should have found the faults during their walk-round checks
- Licence was reduced by half to give Humphreys "another chance"

Operator told that seatbelt checks should be a feature of the walk-round check

Get harassment taped

You may be the last to know when one employee harasses another, but you may still be held responsible. Lawyer Anna West explains

Imagine that, unknown to you, one of your drivers has been harassing a colleague, a cleaner, because of his religion. The first you hear of it is when the cleaner leaves, and threatens you with a legal claim. Will you be held responsible, even though you had no idea what was happening?

The general rule is that the employer will be liable for an employees' behaviour towards their colleagues, even if he is not aware of what they might have been doing. This could prove to be expensive.

An employee who has been harassed at work has a number of potential claims - the main ones being unfair dismissal and discrimination. And now, following a recent case, employees can also use the so-called "stalkers' law" to seek compensation.

Unfair dismissal

An employee who has been harassed at work can resign and claim constructive dismissal. This means that he or she is treated as though you terminated the employment. The employee can claim compensation for the pay and benefits which he or she would have earned during the notice period. In addition, if the employee has worked for you for at least a year, he or she can claim unfair dismissal.

Damages for unfair dismissal are calculated based on the time it would take the employee to find a new job, and are capped at a maximum of £67,100.

Discriminatory harassment

It does not matter if the victim of the harassment is only offended because he or she is particularly sensitive. Also, harassment does not need to be a course of conduct: a one-off incident can be enough if it is sufficiently serious.

If an employee is harassed on the grounds of his or her gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or (from October 1, 2006) age - or if he or she is sexually harassed - this amounts to discriminatory harassment.

This allows the employee to claim unlimited compensation for any financial losses and also an additional amount for injury to feelings, ranging from £500 to around £25,000.

The employee does not need to have been the target of the harassment in order to win a claim. For example, circulating sexist jokes throughout the garage could amount to harassment of an employee who finds this offensive, even if the sender of the jokes did not intend to cause offence.

As the employer, you will be liable for any harassment which takes place at work, and also at events which take place outside work but are connected with it - for example office parties.

You will be able to defend a harassment claim if you can show that you took "reasonable steps" to prevent the harasser doing what he or she did. The starting point is to show that you had an equal opportunities policy, but this will not be enough on its own to amount to "reasonable steps". You should also be able to show that the harasser was aware of the policy and, ideally, received training in it.

"Stalkers' law"

A harassed employee may have a claim under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (PHA), which was originally introduced to deal with stalkers.

Unlike discriminatory harassment, a one-off incident is not enough under the PHA. Harassment must take place on at least two occasions and be directed at the victim.

As the employer, you will be liable if an employee proves that he or she has been harassed under the PHA at work. Compensation consists of damages for financial loss, and for any anxiety caused by the harassment. There is no limit on the amount that can be awarded and you will be liable for the harassment regardless of how hard you tried to prevent it happening.

Employees may be deterred by the fact that this type of claim has to be brought in the County Court or High Court, where the employee will be at risk of paying your costs if he or she loses. In contrast, unfair dismissal and discrimination claims must be brought in the Employment Tribunal, where the usual rule is that each party pays their own costs, regardless of the outcome.

Preventing harassment

Prevention is always be preferable to cure and so employers are advised to take the following steps (see right) to reduce the risk of harassment.

What you can do

- Implement equal opportunities and bullying/ harassment policies
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the policies
- Make it clear that any breach of the policies will be treated as a disciplinary offence
- Train employees in the policies
- Enforce the policies consistently
- Be alert to warning signs of possible problems and take action to remedy the situation at an early stage

Anna West is an employment lawyer with City solicitors, Travers Smith

Taxi legal challenge

Taxi drivers in Brighton are reportedly considering legal action over the recent influx of 'Tuc Tucs' in the city.

Business has taken off for the Asian-style three wheeler vehicles since they were introduced in early July. The fleet of 12 Tuctucs has already carried around 6,000 passengers, much to the irritation of local taxi firms who feel their business is being stolen, and that the vehicles are not complying with their licence restrictions

After a two year battle, operator Dominic Ponniah was licensed by the Traffic Commissioner to run Tuc Tucs like bus services, with designated stops for pick up and drop off, and set routes. But irate taxi drivers have complained that Tuc Tucs are picking up passengers on demand.

Photo evidence of this has apparently been obtained by taxi drivers and will be used during an impending legal case. Watch this space.

'Stop Fuel Theft'

- **Prevents access to tank, while allowing unrestricted filling**
- **Prevents trash being put into tank**
- **Wide range to suit most coach and bus fuel tanks**

Contact JBL Mechanical Engineers

Sunnyside • Edgebolton • Shawbury • Shropshire SY4 4E1

Tel: 01939 251 351• Fax: 01939 251 051
Mobile: 07831 332 913

Inbox

Send your letters to *cbwinbox@rouncymedia.co.uk*, fax 0845 2802927 or write to: Inbox, CBW, 3 The Office Village, Cygnet Park, Forder Way, Hampton, Peterborough PE7 8GX

Community licences

I refer to your article 'Community licences out of control' (*CBW*, August 2):

As a permit-issuing body authorised by Parliament, the Community Transport Association UK takes its responsibilities very seriously. We hold records of all permits that we have ever issued since the start of the legislation. We therefore feel qualified to rebut a number of points made in your article.

The number of bodies able to issue Section 19 small bus permits is closely controlled. Permits can be issued by traffic commissioners, local authorities and the 72 designated national bodies listed in PSV385. All permits that are issued are obtained from the Department for Transport, Buses and Taxis division.

Your inclusion of restricted licences in the same sentence as community permits is confusing to say the least. Restricted licences are held by small-scale commercial operators, whose main business is not passenger transport, and they account for over a third of all PSV operators.

Turning to the safety and maintenance of minibuses operated under permits, exactly the same requirements (as described in the VOSA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness) apply to permit minibuses. Interestingly, our members tell us that when they go to set up safety inspection and maintenance contracts with local garages already involved with PSV operators, they often have to insist on more thorough inspections than the garage has been previously providing.

VOSA has the same powers to stop, inspect and prosecute permit operators. The fact that this results in virtually no procedural intervention is probably an indication of the importance attached to safety in the community sector.

The reported comments from Brigadier Tom Macartney also paint an incorrect picture. Almost all permit operation is 'Hire or Reward' which legally is quite distinct from 'profit'. Even the local Scouts, who often collect money from parents, are technically within the legal definition.

Your readers will know that a limited number of community transport organisations are starting to provide public service contracts. The vast majority of these are either as a full PSV operator or in response to local authority interventions in the passenger transport infrastructure.

The senior traffic commissioners said a few years ago: "Since there is no time limit on the life of these permits there is effectively no way of knowing how many are still in use, though large numbers of new ones are issued every year. Whilst their importance to the community cannot be understated, and whilst there is no evidence to suggest that there is any real concern about their safe operation, a system that contains so few checks and balances must cause concern."

The CTA has been calling for a review of the Section 19 and 22 permit system for the past six years and recently reiterated the need for such a review in our evidence to the Transport Select Committee during its review of bus services.

Keith Halstead, Chief Executive
Community Transport Association UK

LETTER OF THE WEEK

There has been a deal of comment in your magazine and elsewhere about Criminal Records Bureau checks for bus drivers, particularly following the unfortunate experience of Belle Vue Coaches and the recent BBC programme featuring bus contract operations.

I worked recently for a short time in the West Midlands and attended a meeting at Worcestershire County Council where the matter of CRB checks was discussed, particularly whether checks performed for one authority could be accepted by another. There was resistance then from Worcestershire on the grounds that they could not know what standards other authorities might apply. Basically, the officers felt more secure doing their own checks rather than relying on others. Understandably, but this creates a lot of duplication of effort and unnecessary expense all round when an operator may have school contracts with several authorities, all of whom may require their own police checks done.

In the old days of PSV licences, when these were renewed every five years, there was a 'character' question on the form and references were required before the traffic commissioners would grant a licence. Now, of course, one can obtain a PCV entitlement at, say, 21 and it will be 24 years before it is renewed at 45, and only then for the requirement of a medical examination. No checks whatever in the mean time.

I would subscribe to a standard CRB check in a format perhaps agreed with the industry (through the CPT, perhaps) and local authorities (through ATCO, perhaps) and a return to five-yearly renewals, or even three-yearly if thought appropriate, of the PCV entitlement with the check being done at that time either by the traffic commissioners again, or the DVLA.

Your readers may be interested to know that this is the way of things on the Isle of Man now. Separate PSV licences (valid for three years) were only abandoned less than five years ago and replaced by a separate PPV (Public Passenger Vehicle) licence which encompasses the taxi trade as well as bus and coach drivers - after all, all groups carry passengers, and possibly of a vulnerable nature.

The three-yearly renewal includes an enhanced CRB check, which is administered by the Road Transport Licensing Committee. Operators and schools are therefore comforted by a common standard. It does not cost the earth to renew a licence either.

Yes, I know the Isle of Man is rather smaller than the UK, but surely this way of doing the job would ensure common standards throughout the UK and pick up those areas where CRB checks are not done presently?

Ian Maule, Ballasali, Isle of Man

WIN A BUS! Sort of... Drop us a line and if your letter is chosen as our Letter of the Week, you'll receive a top-notch coach or bus model courtesy of our friends at Corgi. Please try to keep your letters under 200 words. The editor's decision is final.

***CBW* is the only paid-for weekly news magazine for the coach and bus industry. Each week the magazine provides a unique insight. Your views are always welcome. Write to the editor at the above address**

Bright-Tech Developments Ltd.

Destination Displays, On-Bus Systems and CCTV

Led Displays.

* Lifetime Warranty.
* Fully DDA and VCA compliant.
* Flat or curved displays.
* Free WinScreen 4 software.
* Flash-card data download.
* Free spares service.

CCTV

* High Quality digital imaging.
* Large 120GB storage capacity.
* Shock sensor on hard disk.
* Ruggedised design.
* Free configuration and commissioning.
* Easy editing facilities.

PowerBlind.

* New Mark 5 design.
* Completely sealed units.
* Bar-code error-check facility.
* Message updates via flash EPROM.
* Free editing software.
* Can be used with our LED displays.

BRIGHT TECH DEVELOPMENTS

Fleets Point House, Willis Way, Poole, BH15 3SS.

TEL.: 01202-679-627 EMAIL: SALES@BRIGHT-TECH.CO.UK

Bright-Tech is an ISO9001-2000 registered Company.

UKAS QUALITY MANAGEMENT 001

Climate Control

from Eberspächer

Passenger expectations increase annually and now most consider a comfortable environment as essential as a comfortable seat.

Eberspächer can provide full climate control or separate air conditioning and independent heating systems.

Make your minibus the number one customer choice
– choose Eberspächer.

Eberspächer Everytime

Eberspächer

Eberspächer (UK) Ltd. Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Road, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3PB
Tel: 01425 480151 – Fax: 01425 480152
Email: enquiries@eberspacher.com – www.eberspacher.com

Operation Tourist

As the summer coach season starts in earnest, Andy Roden goes behind the scenes of VOSA's annual roadside inspection campaign to see what really happens

Don't you just love summer Saturdays on the south coast? Yes, it's the dreaded changeover day, and no changeover day is dreaded more than the first day of the summer holidays, when the M5 becomes a car park from Bristol to Exeter, and when the good folk of Devon and Cornwall avoid driving as much as possible.

It's no coincidence, then, that VOSA starts its summer series of PSV roadside inspections, known as Operation Tourist, on that day, which is why I found myself at Taunton Deane services at 9am on July 22 to see just what happens.

We've heard the horror stories - of inspectors going through coaches with a fine-tooth comb and issuing prohibitions for the most trifling of details; of queues for inspections lasting hours; of horrendous disruption, and of missed flights and ferries. Thankfully, July 22 was rather different.

VOSA's new director of passenger services, Tony Downes, freely admits he has a vested interest in ensuring coaches run safely - his parents are regular coach travellers - but his team at Taunton seems relaxed. Prohibitions and delays caused by the inspections on this day at least are remarkably few.

Key to checks at the southbound services is a pair of weighpads, carefully calibrated to ensure they are as accurate for legal purposes as a static weighbridge. This is the first check - each axle is weighed individually - before more detailed mechanical and driver checks are conducted.

The VOSA team works in conjunction with police motorcycle riders who pull vehicles off the motorway for inspection. Where they see vehicles or operators about which they have specific intelligence, these are called in, as are those about which there may be some concern - but there are also random checks too.

Downes admits this isn't the most effective way of monitoring, and says that VOSA is moving towards an intelligence-based process. This means that the vast majority of operators with good MoT, maintenance, and hours compliance records should be extremely unlikely to be called in, while those rated 'red' by VOSA are much more likely to be hit with an inspection.

The first coach to be called in is from Plymouth and, because it is empty, is spared the weight inspection.

The VOSA team then goes round the vehicle: one member conducting the standard walk-round checks drivers do every day, another examining the tachographs and running through the driver's itinerary and hours, and the last using a hand-held computer - the new Mobile Compliance Device - to check whether there is any specific intelligence on the coach or operator on VOSA's database. The vehicle's no spring chicken, but after around 20 minutes, the inspectors are satisfied there's nothing to concern them, except for a very minor hours issue, which they give the driver some advice on - then he's on his way.

In theory, if a driver was in breach of hours rules, he could be hit with

Top: Inspector using new mobile compliance device. Above left: Tony Downes with VOSA Galaxy. Above: Inside the VOSA van – a mobile office. Left: A French driver's tachos are inspected – and are well within his hours

UK VEHICLES

Vehicle clear of defects	25
PG Immediate	3
"S" marked prohibition	0
Other defects	4
Inspection notices	6
Clear vehicles, UK and foreign	25
Prohibitions, UK and foreign	3

Site location: Taunton

UK OFFENCES

Clear of defects	34
No. of tachos checked	309
Verbal warning	3
Prohibition	1
Report for further investigation	2
UK and foreign total – vehicles clear of offences	32
UK and foreign total – number of tachos checked	309

Site location: Taunton

Above: New techniques will see operators with blemish-free records suffer fewer delays at spot-checks. Left: These tables demonstrate that UK vehicles stopped on the day, and the nature of defects found, are remarkably good news. Below left: A tyre problem spotted by examiners on the motorway – a replacement was fitted and the driver was on his way in two hours.

an immediate enforcement order which would ensure he or she took the statutory rest requirements there and then, and this, says one of the inspectors, isn't unknown. It's not unknown either for foreign drivers receiving a prohibition to be taken in front of the courts immediately to ensure action is taken – but, again, this remains a relatively rare event.

As digital tachographs and drivers' cards become more widespread, the MCD is being fitted with readers that provide an immediate breakdown of hours worked, rather than inspectors having to spend time carefully checking analogue tacho discs.

VOSA's inspectors impress with their courteous approach, and drivers seem relaxed about the inspections: the vast majority have no problems, and seem keen that disreputable operators are caught. And there's some flexibility in the system, too, depending on circumstances – stranding passengers in a location on a cold night with no facilities is clearly not ideal, and all of the inspectors say that they do their very best to minimise disruption.

A case in point is a coach that's got a problem with one of its tyres. In theory, a prohibition notice might be issued if it were thought the fault hadn't happened en-route, but it's far more sensible for the operator to get the tyre changed. An hour or so later, the coach is taking its passengers on their way without a prohibition notice being issued.

That's a pattern that's followed throughout the day – advice is given on minor faults and, wherever possible, the coaches sent on their way. There are just a handful of problems identified, something that speaks volumes about the care most operators take of their passengers.

It's often about communication, says Tony Downes: "If in doubt about anything, I would always encourage operators to get in touch with their local station – please, don't be afraid to seek advice from your local officer."

I suggest that some operators have done this only to be hit hard by extensive and traumatic inspections from VOSA shortly afterwards. Downes acknowledges the industry's concern on this point – and seems to take the suggestion seriously – but there remains suspicion among many operators, and VOSA still has to address this.

In one of VOSA's Ford Galaxy inspection cars, enforcement support officer Gary Bell, a former HGV driver, says that operators give them a lot of positive feedback: "The good ones really welcome us, but I think sometimes people don't realise what we do. When you get a vehicle that's dangerous, or where the driver's worked long hours, the difference you make to road safety is obvious, and rewarding."

by John Whittle

'Golden years of regulation'? It's a myth

In this Open Platform special, John Whittle argues with the notion that all in the garden was rosy when the PTEs and councils controlled services

The case for re-regulation with control of bus services by PTEs and local councils is being pressed very strongly as the answer to declining passenger numbers, rising fares and loss of service on unprofitable routes.

The aim would seem to be a return to circumstances similar to those created by the 1968 Act. That Act provided for the establishment of PTEs, gave them and local councils responsibility for co-ordinating and integrating public transport and required the National Bus Company and Scottish Bus Group to co-operate with them.

There are, therefore, lessons from history, which can shed some light on the matter. The table and graphs (opposite) relating to the first decade following the 1968 Act, have been extracted from the Government's Annual Abstract of Statistics (1980 edition).

As noted in the abstract: "Figures prior to 1976 have been revised to take into account all changes between the various parts of the public sector and between the private and public sectors." Consequently, the earlier figures for the PTEs relate to the operations for which they subsequently assumed responsibility. The 1975 figures are included as the PTEs for Greater Glasgow (later Strathclyde), South and West Yorkshire were not formed until 1973/74. The average receipts per passenger are derived from the total passenger receipts and are, therefore, a reasonable proxy for the average fares. For comparison, the Retail Price Index increased by 186.83% between 1969 and 1978 and 46.22% 1975-78.

In the light of these figures, there is a need to evaluate what, if anything, would achieve improvement the second time round. It could be argued that the powers given under the 1968 Act were inadequate; that franchising on the 'London model' with PTEs and Councils deciding routes, timetables and fares would provide the solution.

On the other hand, the local authorities could and did exert considerable influence on these matters in the past and, in the case of their direct operations, had total control.

The PTE networks dominated the areas served. This was enhanced by operating contracts with NBC companies and, in the case of Strathclyde, a statutory monopoly covering most of Glasgow. Strathclyde achieved the distinction of being categorised in the buses' White Paper as a "prime example of a high subsidy/high fare authority". Nevertheless, on becoming an arms-length company, then an MEBO, it improved its efficiency to the extent it was able to maintain a significant proportion of its network without subsidy and to expand into new markets.

It might also be argued that the powers were limited in the past by the need to obtain approval by the traffic commissioners, who could take a different view of the public interest. There is, however, little evidence of major frustration resulting from this and, while irksome, such checks and balances have an advantage.

> With the profitable services heavily dependent on the patronage of the less affluent members of society, it is highly questionable whether such a policy is equitable

If you want to let off some steam, just tap away at the keyboard and send your rant (or carefully-reasoned views) to *cbwinbox@rouncymedia.co.uk*, or fax 0845 280 2927. Make 'Open Platform' the subject line. Alternatively, send your missive to: CBW, 3 The Office Village, Cygnet Park, Forder Way, Hampton, Peterborough PE7 8GX

> The industry response seems strangely reticent, contrasting starkly with the highly public campaign by the BET group against nationalisation

Against the general poor performance, it is the case that South Yorkshire PTE bucked the trend of passenger decline with its low fares policy. That it was unique in this respect leads to the conclusion that cost was a major factor - as is widely acknowledged to be the case today with the 'London model'.

Certainly, franchising whole networks would enable part of the deficit on unprofitable services to be cross-subsidised from profitable routes. A study of SBG services carried out prior to deregulation revealed that around 75% of the losses were met by cross-subsidy. This resulted in a levy (stealth tax?) of about 20% on the fares charged to users of the profitable services.

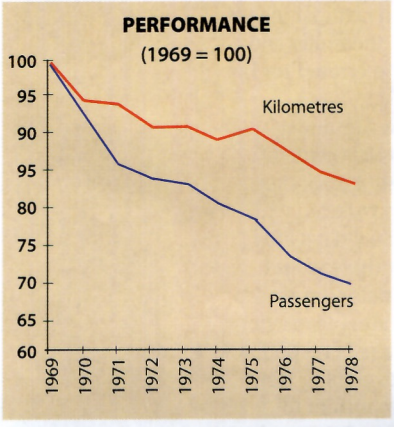
With the profitable services heavily dependent on the patronage of the less affluent members of society (those less able to afford private transport), it is highly questionable whether such a policy is equitable, although it is possibly preferable to facing the wrath of the electorate by funding the losses through taxation. Maintaining the profits necessary to fund cross-subsidy resulted in above-inflation fares increases and reductions in service on the profitable routes both contributing to the decline in passengers and,

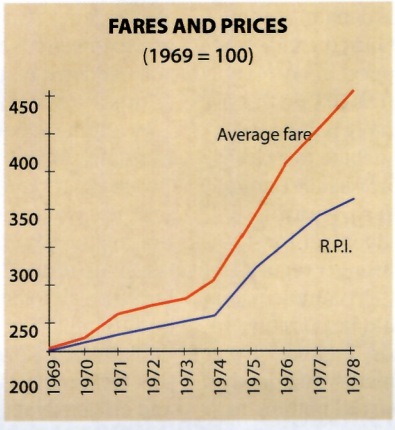
therefore, counter-productive.

A robust appraisal of the financial implications and social benefits of all the options is a prerequisite, together with an assessment of the political will to provide the funds required. As any increased funding would have to come from local or national taxation, there should be a clear demonstration of value for money.

The industry response seems strangely reticent, contrasting starkly with the highly public campaign by the BET group against nationalisation in the late 1940s. The slogan then used - "Don't let them take you for a ride" - might well have some relevance!

Concern about media distortion is understandable, but there is a danger of the case being lost by default. Operators should be trumpeting the benefits created as a result of deregulation and privatisation and highlighting the measures which would help continuing improvement. This needs a concerted effort by all constituents, large and small, possibly something the CPT could co-ordinate?





The figures on these graphs are shown as indices (1969 = 100), with graphs of performance – the passenger numbers and kilometres run – and average fares, compared with the Retail Price Index at the time

	1969	1975	1978	% Change 1969–78	% Change 1975–78
PASSENGER JOURNEYS (millions)					
Passenger Transport Executives	2827	2313	2012	-28.83	-13.01
Municipal operators	1456	1180	1052	-27.7	-10.85
NBC & SBG	3393	2505	2176	-35.87	-13.13
TOTAL	**7676**	**5998**	**5240**	**-31.74**	**-12.64**
VEHICLE KILOMETRES (millions)					
Passenger Transport Executives	589	554	517	-12.22	-6.68
Municipal operators	283	261	246	-13.07	-5.75
NBC & SBG	1617	1431	1287	-20.41	-10.06
TOTAL	**2489**	**2246**	**2050**	**-17.64**	**-8.73**
AVERAGE RECEIPTS PER PASSENGER (pence)					
Passenger Transport Executives	3.15	7.68	12.85	+307.94	+67.32
Municipal operators	2.73	6.82	12.14	+344.69	+78.01
NBC & SBG	5.10	14.04	21.99	+331.18	+56.62
TOTAL	**3.93**	**10.17**	**16.50**	**+319.85**	**+62.24**

For the private sector, the figures show, for the decade, increases of 37.16% in passengers

A search of the *CBW* archives, perhaps eventually leading to a series of articles, could also yield a useful contribution.

Just in my immediate locality, there are examples of services offering better frequencies than provided under regulation and co-ordination. Nationwide, the list would be impressive.

Similarly, a catalogue of services or networks where passenger numbers have increased - especially where they were in decline previously - would help hammer home the message

Finally, reverting to the 1980 Annual Abstract of Statistics mentioned earlier, figures were included for "other operators" - ie the private sector. Interestingly, the figures show, for the decade, increases of 37.16% in passengers and 45.93% in kilometres with a lower increase in average receipts per passenger at 201.39%. Those operating local bus services were, of course, not subject to the requirement to co-operate with the PTEs and councils as applied to NBC and SBG. Also, at that time, the private sector was heavily engaged in non-local bus operations - contracts, hires, etc - markets subject to less regulation and more competition. This must tell us something.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE...

- Minibus - Optare Toro and Excel Conversions' Mercedes Vito. Plus a profile of Wiltshire-based Wigglybus
- Profile - Go Ahead's Brighton & Hove
- Face to Face - ATCO's John Hodgkins

PLUS News, Deliveries, Products...

CBW's new parliamentary insider will be taking a bi-weekly look at the political scene along the corridors of Westminster and inside Marsham Street

A quiet summer?

This first political column for *CBW* comes just after parliament has risen for the summer recess and provides a good opportunity for a quick overview of the transport landscape, with Douglas Alexander just three months into his first full cabinet post.

Relative to the turmoil in the Home Office, transport must look like a sea of tranquillity for ambitious politicians, and an ideal brief on which to cut your teeth as an up and coming figure in the Labour Party. Douglas Alexander will no doubt wish to emulate Alistair Darling's relative success in keeping out of trouble and keeping transport off the front page. But Darling's success was built as much around avoiding the difficult decisions as to actually solving anything, and he has left his successor with some potentially nasty issues around the corner - of which resolving the debate about future bus policy is only one.

The railways remain strapped for cash, and the publication next summer of the first "High Level Output Specification" for the railways, along with an associated Statement of Funds Available, will be the first indication of what shape and size of railway the government wants to see - and is prepared to fund. Those who have suspected that the level of funding available for the railways, either directly from government via Network Rail or from local authorities and the PTEs, will force cuts in services with the introduction of substitute bus services, will soon know if their suspicions are proved right - even if it may take a couple of years or so for budgetary pressures to force the hand of local politicians. Certainly, if the "devolution" debate that took place during the passage of the Railways Act 2005 through parliament means anything, then some hard choices are going to have to be made.

And the publication of the Eddington report in November will further fuel a debate about the long term infrastructure needs for the UK and, inevitably therefore, the amount of money that the government will need to find to deliver what is likely to be a long shopping list of projects. But the escape route for Ministers is that Eddington is only looking from 2015 onwards, enabling then to claim credit for overseeing an important debate about future transport investment needs, without having to worry too much about where the money will come from!

Closer to home, the debate about bus policy rumbles on and on, although the prospect of an announcement from the DfT on this in the Autumn might finally help to bring this highly polarised debate to a close. It is extraordinary how Alistair Darling singularly failed to do so, always seeming to keep the door ajar for those who favour a stronger regulatory regime, despite repeated comments in House that there would be no return to the pre-1985 regulatory regime.

Given that the regulatory regime that had existed up to then did nothing to halt the decline in bus patronage, it is a touch bizarre that Ministers and the policy wonks in Great Minster House have not managed to slay the regulatory / Quality Contract dragon before now - a testimony, perhaps, to the astute political lobbying of Labour controlled Passenger Transport Authorities? Unlikely, given that there seems to be no particular love lost between the PTAs and DfT. Or just another example of Alistair Darling's cautious approach to policy making? Much more likely!

This is a debate that future columns will comment on in greater detail as the policy review trundles on.

Then there is the thorny problem of congestion charging - a matter of considerable interest to the bus and coach industry given the potential for modal shift this creates. In recent times Alistair Darling was at pains to say it was only a matter of time before a national scheme would be introduced, with a number of additional local schemes in the more congested conurbations and larger towns and cities. Odd then that a national scheme always seems to be a decade away! And the decision to try to persuade local authorities to be the first to put their heads on the block by introducing their own schemes first, enticed to do so with the promise of being hosed down with cash from the Transport Innovation Fund, is indicative surely of continuing political nerves about the electoral implications. Yet Ken Livingstone was brave enough to bite the bullet and still managed to get re-elected for his efforts.

Meantime, Douglas Alexander was quick to pick up the theme of "when not if" congestion charging schemes would be introduced with the announcement, only days after taking up office, that there would be four technology trials supported by £10 million of funding from the department. Now there is no doubt that technology is developing fast, and obviously it is important to get this right, but around the world congestion charging schemes are being introduced and one has to wonder why we need yet more trials. After the fiasco that was the (aborted) Lorry Road User Charge, private sector technology providers must be seriously wondering whether the UK really does represent a viable market or not.

As the demand for travel continues to grow, and fast, so there are some really serious issues to be addressed if the transport infrastructure is to cope and we have sufficient capacity to meet demand. Or does government take a bold and potentially unpopular decision, supported by the need to address the serious environmental impact of transport, to curb demand and break the "predict and provide" philosophy that has largely dominated transport policy in the past? Welcome, Mr Alexander, to the complex and difficult world of transport. This column wishes you well - but will be tracking your performance closely.

But, Chris Grayling, we will be watching your performance as the Conservative Transport Spokesman closely too! The Conservative's transport policy review is something this column will also return to in the future.

The Riddler

GET YOUR OWN COPY!

CBW
Number One For PCV Professionals
1st for recruitment Job Adverts Every Week
COACH AND BUS WEEK Wednesday July 12, 2006 Issue 738 £2.50
THIS WEEK
Lawmans
Northants operator gears up for business with fleet replacement programme page 32
Bus subsidies
Who gets what, and from where page 28
CCTV
Drivers warm to Black Box technology page 40
Last Stop
Bus shelter goes on ebay! page 55
Addison Lee buys Redwing
Campana sells to private hire giant page 4
BBC hits school buses
Real Story programme films banned Welsh operator 'still in business' page 4

If you do not receive your own personal copy of Coach & Bus Week (CBW) delivered direct to your home or office, you should consider taking out a subscription.

Since CBW was bought by independent publisher Rouncy Media in November last year, it has been transformed. CBW is bigger, brighter and with more PCV news and features.

Now every Wednesday, CBW is first with the news, comment, analysis and coach and bus "for sale" ads. If you don't have your own subscription copy, you risk not keeping up with all that's happening in the PCV world.

You can subscribe to Coach & Bus Week for just £69 and receive 51 issues direct to your door. And don't forget that your subscription payment is tax deductible!

AND THAT'S NOT ALL

AS A CBW SUBSCRIBER YOU WILL RECEIVE

- **FREE Out+About, the monthly coach tourism magazine**
- **FREE Minibus, the monthly guide to the minibus industry**

CBW Minibus
NEW
THE NEW ESSENTIAL READ FOR MINIBUS OPERATORS
OUT+ ABOUT
WINDSOR Tours fit for a king
BTTF The very best of British
FERRIES Cross-Channel deals
RAILWAYS Let off some steam
THEATRE Evita returns to London
COACH AND BUS WEEK'S GUIDE TO COACH TOURISM
PREVIEW INSIDE

CALL 0870 830 4969

quoting 0022 or order online at *www.subscription.co.uk/cbw/0022*

SUBSCRIPTIONS - NEED TO CONTACT US?

Simply visit us online at:
www.subscription.co.uk/help
Using the subscriber number printed on the polywrap of your magazine you can:
- Change your address
- Update your email address
- Advise us of a change of name
- Check your start or expiry issue date

...24 hours a day, every day!
Or
E-MAIL *cbw@subscription.co.uk*
TELEPHONE 0870 830 4969
TELEPHONE OVERSEAS +44 1858 438782
All phone lines are open 8am-9.30pm Monday to Friday; Saturdays 8am-4pm

POST CBW Subscriptions, Tower House, Sovereign Park. Market Harborough, LEICESTER LE16 9EF.

Subscription rates

1 Year (UK)	£69
2 Years (UK)	£120
1 Year (Eire/Europe)	£115
1 Year (Rest of the World), Airmail	£140

Meet... Dave Parry

West Midlands tour operator Parrys International has perhaps won more coach industry awards than any other. It was established and is still run by former speedway star Dave Parry, who believes there's a future for coach touring only if everyone raises their game. Mark Williams meets him...

Mark Williams: Where has the coach industry lost its customers?

Dave Parry: The future of coaching is certainly tourism. The ordinary public don't travel by express coach any more. The only people travelling by express coach are the young or the old... or people on a restricted budget. The people who travel by coach are people who want holidays. And we can beat any other form of holiday in respect of the customer expectations - if it's done properly.

MW: You have great self-belief in your standards. Do you think those you compete with have the same commitment?

DP: We've still got to be competitive. But when the industry is trying to get a new market from people who haven't been on a coach since they left school, their reaction can either be "Nothing's changed" or "Wow! This is totally different". If they get treated badly or have a bad crew, they are not likely to travel by coach again. They have plenty of other travel choices. The problem is, the coach industry convinces itself it's all good. It's not.

MW: Do you think that coach operations will be absorbed into big companies, as has happened in bussing?

DP: No. Even in bussing, we've seen EasyBus come in, but what's happened to that? What we do as operators is highly specialised. Only Brian Souter's managed to make an impression with Megabus.com. The history of big companies is that they have less service to offer and less control. Only regional coach tour operators will be successful. It's the only way forward, because in touring you'd end up with a big pick-up routine.

MW: What do you think of lengthy journeys with a lot of pick-ups?

DP: Well, I suppose it makes for a nice scenic tour. Many of these people are retired, so you could argue they've nothing better to do. But a younger person won't accept it.

When we are trying to attract a younger market - and we've been successful at that - we've got to deliver a 'punchy' service.

MW: Can you quantify your success?

DP: Yes. We heavily invest in theatre weekends, and if we choose, say, Mamma Mia or We Will Rock You, we get a younger age group. The same with our Paris breaks; there isn't a better way to do Paris than by coach. You can fly there but once you're there you have all the other arrangements to make. The same with Dublin. But the real future is in longer tours with a hectic programme, such as the Americans do. There is no other way to do that properly than by coach. It's a perfect way to travel and attracts a younger audience.

These people don't collapse in the hotel. They are always up and about. Hotels tell us our age group is a lot younger than the rest. I'm very interested in that style, with a different hotel every night, such as our 'Highlights' tours. Anyway, we always catch up with the 'American Way' eventually.

> "If passengers get treated badly or have a bad crew, they are not likely to travel by coach again. They have plenty of other travel choices"

MW: How do you make your expensive tours work?

DP: I've always believed that a high-priced tour attracts the right kind of people. Cheap prices bring cheap people. So we try to steer away from that. But we all dip our prices sometimes.

We keep our product the same as far as is sensible. Running one new destination is as hard as running 20 tours to your usual destination. And if we sell the same tour week after week, we can maintain quality. Making it seem different is a question of changing your marketing.

Word of mouth is the number one marketing tool; if you wanted a builder, you'd ask someone who has just successfully hired a builder to give you a number.

MW: Why are events not being attended?

DP: There are too many. If you look at World Travel Market, it's the wrong time of year. BTTF is the right time of year, but why do we want Scotland afterwards, when it's represented at the BTTF? The Stoneleigh Coach Tourism event was just an add-on.

We went to the Coach Tourism Council conference at Llandudno this year because it was associated with Bonded Coach Holidays, and I'm a committee member of BCH. Now I'm all in favour of a conference which gets people together, but did we need another workshop?

I didn't think it was appropriate that it was at a weekend - it's supposed to be work, so it should be weekdays. There it was, a busy weekend, and operators were never going to be there [24 operators were represented].

MW: What do we do to change falling attendances?

DP: Too many shows have diluted the interest. There are so many things going on now - regional tourism events, familiarisation trips. Years ago we had little choice, and the current range of shows needs to be made more attractive. I also think operators should be invited, not charged. That would have been a wise move at the CTC Llandudno event. And I consider it a downmarket venue. It might have been nice 100 years ago. We should be looking at progressive venues, where operators can see something new and interact with each other. It lacks imagination. Even London's more attractive because there's always

> We need to raise the profile of the whole industry, but we need to be better, too, with better-paid staff, better training and better products

something to see. Maybe a cruise ferry, or maybe a superfast ferry with events at each end. And you must be able to stay where the event takes place - the after-dinner talking is an important element. We've got to network.

Mixed events with bus people are something I wouldn't attend. No disrespect to bus operators, but it's not the same business.

MW: Why does it always seem to be the same people at events?

DP: It's down to imagination. You get new ideas from meeting people. People who know this go to the same events. If you stop in a business day-in day-out, you can't see the wood for the trees.

If I drive a tour, I see things differently from the way it looks at the office. No operator can know what's going on if he doesn't get out there and see for himself. These are operators at the sharp end of the business, meeting the challenges and investing in product. We don't want to be the ostriches with our heads stuck in the sand, and the old philosophies which never worked.

MW: You were quite vociferous about the Isle of Wight parking fiasco, and have cancelled departures in 2007. Why was that?

DP: We've got this problem in Paris and Italy, and I believe that eventually it will cost them a lot of tourism. But the Isle of Wight is our own market. It isn't a matter of the charges, it's way it was done and the attitude of councillor Andy Sutton. We are not a 'bucket and spade' market and we do bring a lot of business to the island. If they'd been saying they wanted to make the situation better with the money, that would be fine.

We now have three departure dates next year, and we had 27 this year. But I think the outcome of the protest looks positive, even if the promises remain to materialise.

MW: Do you hear of much discrimination against coach holidays?

DP: It's everywhere, isn't it? When they build a hotel, they never think of coaches. They put a roof over the entrance we can't get under. They build schools that coaches can't access, and even old people's homes with no coach access. It's always an afterthought.

Yet places like London can't exist without coaching. I went to a lunch meeting at the Houses of Parliament and the politician who spoke said he knew coaches are required for OAPs and school kids. That's what he sees us as. We have a bad image, without a doubt. We need to raise the profile of the whole industry, but we need to be better, too, with better-paid staff, better training and better products. And we shouldn't work our drivers too hard. I like them to go out each day with an appetite for the job - a hunger. They need a break to keep them sharp.

MW: What are you doing tomorrow?

DP: I've got to disappear tomorrow afternoon to look at three or four hotels to finalise our 2007 programme. If I don't actually physically walk in to see them I'm not confident enough to put them in the programme.

Real-time info becomes the norm

RTI will soon be standard on the UK's buses. David Crawford looks at some of the technological advances and how bus companies are benefiting

By end-2006, nearly 20,000 of the regular service buses plying in Great Britain - 52% of the total - will be equipped to give passengers real-time information (RTI) on expected arrival times - an increase of nearly 20% on end-2005.

As a result, numbers of journeys on buses fitted with the key on-vehicle satellite tracking units will rise from 2bn to 2.7bn. This will equate to 60% of all trips being made. At some point during the remainder of this year, in other words, it will become the norm rather than the exception for bus users to be able to plan and make journeys using timely service information.

They will be doing this at stop or, increasingly), via their mobile phones or the internet. In addition to passengers, the beneficiaries will be operators, who will increasingly be able to use the information to deliver better service performance - in turn, encouraging more patrons.

These figures mark a tipping point in the government's campaign to make the bus more attractive as a means of travel. They come from Centaur Consulting Ltd, a specialist agency which regularly monitors bus RTI technology take-up for the Department of Transport (DfT), the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive. (Centaur also acts as the secretariat for the Real Time Information Group (RTIG) of local authorities, bus operators and equipment suppliers - see page 35).

Behind this growth in RTI delivery is the widescale availability of new intelligent transport systems (ITS) technologies. Satellite-based automatic vehicle location (AVL) has progressively become more accurate and, at the same time, cheaper to install.

Recent improvements in data communications, including the advent of the general packet radio service (GPRS) and 3G mobile phones, and Portsmouth's 'mesh' network, are supplementing older, proven, analogue private mobile radio (PMR) systems. Full-screen displays are appearing in addition to familiar light-emitting diode (LED) dot-matrix panels, as used in London's Countdown system, to give more information at major interchanges and in shopping centres. (Edinburgh and Poole have good examples).

The Internet has made possible on-street information kiosks with touch-screen panels, as in Portsmouth, and at-work and home-based running-check services such as AcisLive, or Leicester's rapidly-expanding StarTrak, developed by German company Init. The latter enables intending passengers to text individual bus stop codes to a national number to access 'next departure' information', using technology supplied by German company Init, and also offers a website.

UK-headquartered Kizoom has recently launched its own local SMS-based bus information services, which, says the company's Aubrey Thompson, it plans to take nationwide

> The internet has made possible on-street information kiosks with touchscreen panels

> The great majority of passengers like having RTI at stops, and there is a high degree of satisfaction

by the end of the year. Take-up of all these 'virtual' information systems will receive a huge regional boost under Transport for London's £117 million iBus programme

Co-ordination

Centaur Consulting project director Mark Cartwright stresses that: "Putting all these components together into a useful and reliable system is no mean feat. It needs careful co-ordination between local authorities, bus operators in their area, and suppliers of technology solutions.

"One problem is that systems coming from multiple suppliers do not always interconnect, highlighting the importance for technical standards.

"The need for these can appear in surprising places. For example, local authorities have faced a major headache in fitting display signs onto the wide range of bus shelter types that are available. There is now a national standard for shelter fits."

Much of RTIG's work relates to the development of technical standards, both UK-specific and international. Says Cartwright: "I have heard authorities and operators agree that, without national standards, RTI implementation could well come to a grinding halt. Deployment in the UK only began in earnest at the point where government money was made available, not just to fund early installations, but also to develop standards. These have now become the backbone of later (locally-funded) deployments."

One recent success involves the development of the Service Interface for Real-time Information (SIRI) as a technical specification for the European standards body CEN. SIRI is currently in a formal international voting process, due to end in September, and its benefits will include economies of scale that will make for a more competitive marketplace for equipment – and, so, lower costs.

"Unusually", says Cartwright, "there have been few technical difficulties in developing a framework that works with multi-national and regional activities."

But one key practical challenge, he admits, is the need for a more accurate way of predicting, on the basis of the current location of a bus, when exactly it will arrive at subsequent stops. This, he says, "is frankly something of a black art, as the prediction has to take into account not only what traffic is like at that time, how it is likely to develop."

Key issues include the precise location of bus stops in relation to, for example, traffic lights, and whether the latter are equipped to give automatic priority to public transport. There are also temporary factors, such as roadworks or traffic incidents.

The subject is currently the focus of active research, among companies supplying RTI systems (such as Acis, AIM and Infocell), and those providing road network models and databases (such as Siemens Traffic and Tenet).

Says Infocell customer services manager. Adrian Waters: "We are currently working with local authorities on ways of integrating with their traffic control systems. With the emergence of urban traffic management and control (UTMC, see below), all systems provide data into a common pool, which applications such as RTPI can access.

"Thus, predictions for stops along a route can reflect current traffic hold-ups. Again, if the last three buses on

Left: Illuminating: An RTI display at a stop in Palmeira Square, Hove, being served by one of Go-Ahead Group member company Brighton & Hove's 280-plus buses

So what's UTMC?

Urban traffic management and control (UTMC) began as a DfT initiative to encourage the development of systems to coordinate all the traffic movement needs of a town or city, using modern ITS technology. A single control centre communicates with traffic signals and signs, parking management and public transport priority systems, using common technical standards that enable authorities to source, extend and replace equipment from a multiplicity of manufacturers.

a particular route have been delayed, this is evidence of congestion along the way, and this knowledge is available for all predictions within that area. So, when a bus is heading in the direction of the congestion, bus stops further ahead can have their displays updated immediately to adjust arrival times."

In another approach, Tenet is currently installing its CUTLAS UTMC-compliant product for Kent County Council in Maidstone. The aim, says the company's Mark Percival, is to encourage motorists to take advantage of park-and-rides by giving them reliable advance information, via variable message times, on current timings for onward journeys by bus. There are also suggestions that SIRI communications standards could be extended for use in traffic management, so bringing the two applications closer together.

Value

But, says Cartwright, "with many of the engineering challenges already being resolved, passengers are starting to realise the value of RTI. By feeling better

> **RTI as a whole gives us another option within our toolkit to monitor and control service provision**

West Midlands Public Transport Authority chair Cllr Gary Clarke at the recent launch of Birmingham's SMS-based RTI system. Suppliers include: Acis (system), Vodafone (GPRS communications); Kizoom (SMS service); Telent/Mott MacDonald consortium (web and off-street information services); and Faber Maunsell (technical and project management services)

RTI and the RTIG

The Department for Transport's July 2000 Ten Year Plan included the goal of delivering "real time information on many local bus services by 2003". By early 2002, however, it was clear that most RTI that was available to bus passengers was still concentrated in London, while outside the capital, provision was patchy and isolated, often consisting of a single corridor or bus route.

In April 2002, therefore, the DfT allocated £20 million of Supplementary Credit Approval for 19 local authority RTI projects across England to help deliver its goal under the plan.

These ranged from large systems in passenger transport executive (PTE) areas, involving several hundred vehicles, to much smaller systems in rural counties and unitary authorities.

As a result of this kick-start, the status of bus RTI in England has since changed dramatically. The 19 supported projects have all now come to fruition – if not by the original target date of December 2003 – and, between them, provide tracking equipment for some 2,300 buses and at-stop systems for more than 1,400 stops.

Information at a glance: RTI in action

The RTIG predated the DfT initiative, beginning life as an ad hoc grouping of operators and authorities who came together to discuss the problems of running services across local authority boundaries, and the importance of standardising interfaces. Now subscription-based, it has 80 members, who now include suppliers, from the UK and overseas.

or city, using modern ITS technology. A single control centre communicates with traffic signals and signs, parking management and public transport priority systems, using common technical standards that enable authorities to source, extend and replace equipment from a multiplicity of manufacturers.

informed, they begin to perceive bus services as being more reliable (whether in fact they are or not). They feel more comfortable and safer, especially at night time; single women in particular like the idea of being able to go to the bus stop only when they are certain that a bus is coming.

A recently-published long-term RTIG/DfT study on bus services in East Kent shows that "the great majority of passengers like having RTI at stops, and there is a high degree of satisfaction with the service. Surprisingly, willingness to pay for RTI (eg, over SMS) is increasing rather than decreasing".

Operators, too, can directly benefit from the deployment of RTI. Comments Roger French, MD of the Brighton & Hove Bus Company who use a Siemens-developed system: "Our experience has been that RTI has been a godsend for managing the challenges of running 280 buses in a congested city. The system comes into its own not only in ensuring that we optimise hour-by-hour reliability, but in coping with big events such as London-to-Brighton runs and pride parades.

"These can bring complete traffic havoc. But RTI enables us quietly and efficiently to get buses back to their schedules in a way that was impossible before the system was introduced. It is proving increasingly effective in adjusting running times and timetables, as well as vehicle and driver schedules, to reflect known regular problems on the road which we pick up through reporting procedures.

"The biggest impact has come through the high-profile on-street signs, which have really impressed both passengers and non-passengers, and it was a great move by the city council to make them so prominent. Recent developments in having the information available through the internet and text messaging are the icing on the cake."

Adds Steve Jasper, customer services director of National Express Group subsidiary Travel West Midlands: "RTI as a whole gives us another option within our toolkit to monitor and control service provision. It also gives us the opportunity to take corrective action to improve our service offering by having more information available."

Working with CENTRO, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, the company has recently installed an SMS-based RTI system covering some 1,700 stops and shelters on over 30 bus services into and out of Birmingham city centre. TVM has equipped 366 of its vehicles.

The 19 DfT-funded project areas...

- Derby
- Essex and districts
- Gloucestershire
- Greater Manchester
- Kent
- Lancashire
- Leicester
- Lincolnshire
- Merseyside and Halton
- Plymouth
- Poole and neighbouring districts
- Portsmouth
- Reading
- Surrey
- West and South Yorkshire
- West Midlands
- Wiltshire
- Wokingham
- York

Tachograph Analysis Solutions
Making the crossover easier
In the new digital tachograph era, you will no longer be able to visually check driver activities as you can with wax charts. Although many of your responsibilities won't change, the way you work will have to.
OPTAC™ is the new range of Tachograph Analysis products designed by Stoneridge to help you handle this change. OPTAC supports viewing, analysing and storing driver and vehicle activity captured in Digital Tachographs and Driver's Smartcards. A combination of download tools, PC software and first-class support, OPTAC has a solution to meet your requirements no matter how big or small your organisation.
For more details on OPTAC, or other Tachograph analysis solutions, please contact your Stoneridge Representative on 0870 887 9202 or visit www.optac.info
Stoneridge Electronics Ltd, Charles Bowman Avenue, Claverhouse Industrial Park, Dundee, Scotland.
Tel +44 (0)870 887 9202 Fax +44 (0)870 887 9241 E-mail: sales@elc.stoneridge.com
OPTAC™ and the box device are a trademark of Stoneridge Electronics™
OPTAC
A Stoneridge Product

Making technology pay

The Kings Ferry prides itself in getting the gadgets and gizmos ahead of the rest. But if you don't get the timing right, says MD Steve O'Neill, you can make costly mistakes

Award-winning Kent operator The Kings Ferry has every good reason to invest in IT and the latest technology as it becomes available.

The complexity of running its extensive London commuter services, in which timing and quality are absolutely critical, and the sheer number of services and vehicles within the Gillingham operation and its sister companies, make the control offered by new technology a must.

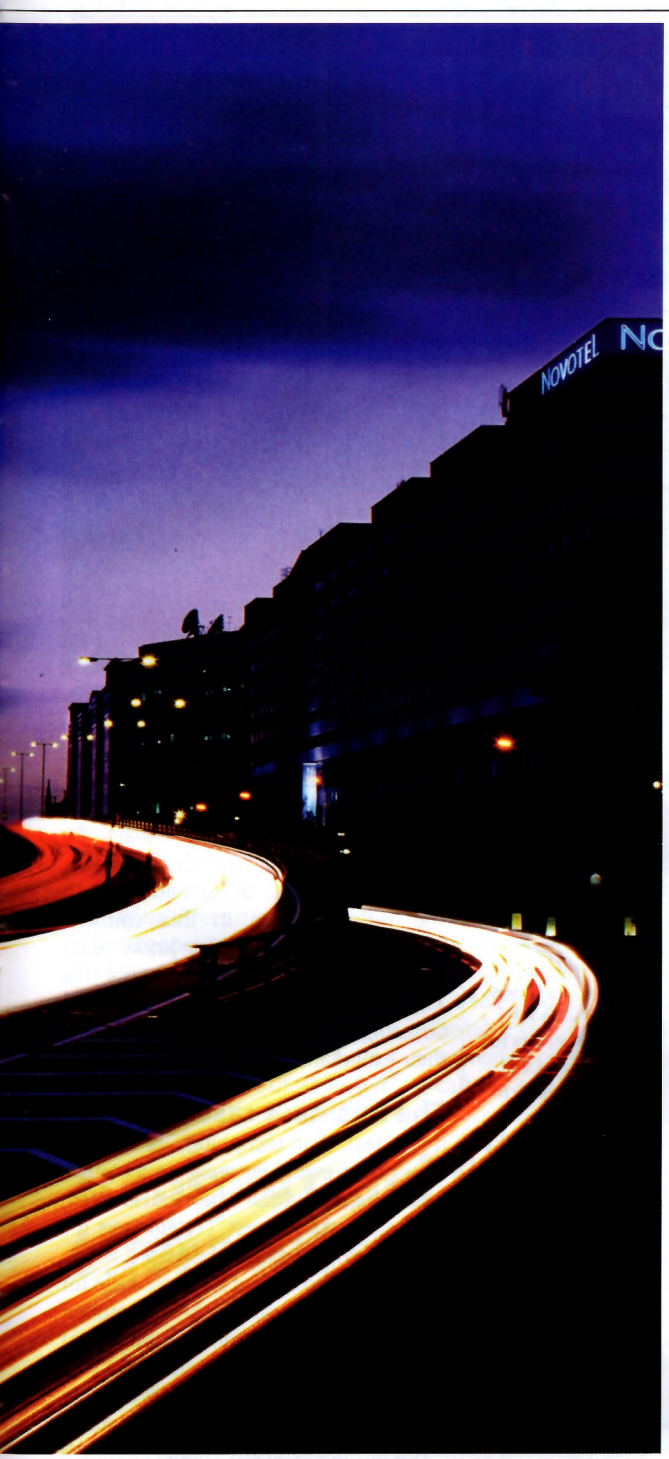
"Our experience of computer technology goes back to 1982, when we had our first computer - I think it had 32kb memory and ran MS-DOS," said Steve O'Neill. "We set up a booking system on it, and we ran it until 1995, before moving over to Windows."

Not only were computers in use for monitoring bookings, but The Kings Ferry cut its own vinyls on a machine controlled by an Apple Macintosh computer. The savings on livery were obvious - but that's what operators should be assessing, says O'Neill.

"Technology and IT are excellent, but you just need to make sure that it's working for you - so much of it can waste your time instead of saving time."

Vehicle tracking

O'Neill says nobody's immune from making mistakes: "We had our first vehicle tracking system in 1995, but



Left: Customers for The Kings Ferry's VIP fleet demand the kitchen sink and much more, including electronics. Above right: Tracking technology allows The Kings Ferry to give 'live' answers to customers waiting for commuter services

we worked for the system rather than the other way around. Our new system gives us a vehicle report when we want it. Take excessive engine idling: if we get the report immediately we can call the driver and deal with the situation. It's no good calling a part-time driver a couple of days later.

"One of the problems with the system was that it used SMS - texting, in essence - to move the information around. We think of texts as instant, but they aren't always. The GPRS systems on offer now are genuinely 'live'."

The latest GPRS-based tracking systems are 'Black Box' technology - able to monitor much more than just vehicle position. "But even with GPS, you have to be careful," says O'Neill. "If you work in areas with a lot of high-rise, you may find standard GPS doesn't work. If that's the case, you really need super-sensitive GPS, and that has only become available in the last year."

Mobile communication

Even the humble mobile phone has seen a sea change in the way operators communicate with drivers. The Kings Ferry has always taken the view that the phone should be a part of the coach, so that it doesn't get lost and the operator knows which phone is with which vehicle: "Mobile phones were a revolution. The next thing is PDAs, which can do even more."

Functions can include storing passenger lists, interacting with other equipment and providing satellite navigation: "We have been very late with sat-nav because we wanted it to integrate with our tracking. Standard satellite navigation brings its own problems, with a tendency for drivers to follow the sav-nav rather than their common sense; you have to get the balance right."

Wi-Fi

The Kings Ferry has set the pace with on-vehicle Wi-Fi - a wireless system to bring the internet, for a small charge, to the passenger's laptop computer.

"We've dabbled so far, but it will come to all our vehicles within ten years. So far, we've installed it on the VIP coaches which are used for corporate and football teams. The units we fitted to our commuter fleet were a bit ahead of the game - you can be too early - but our customers are now using it and it's cost-effective.

"On the other hand," says O'Neill, "it's sometimes hard to tell which of your technology is being used."

He cites the example of the commuter vehicle tracking system, which can be viewed by any of The Kings Ferry's customers via a website allowing them to be at the stop exactly on time: "When we lost our internet connection one day, the phone started ringing asking us where the system had gone. That was oddly reassuring."

CCTV

The Kings Ferry has really held back with CCTV, having it fitted only to two school buses on which there had been some trouble.

"But without a shadow of a doubt, it can pay dividends. It can prove to a parent that what you say is true. It saves confusion and it avoids conflict - parents naturally protect their children from allegations."

Once again, though, The Kings Ferry was waiting for the technology to suit its needs before committing. Now, it is planning to fit a nine-camera system: "Steve Whiteway [Epsom Coaches' operations director] is right that on a new coach, the extra for CCTV is hardly noticed. We steered clear at first because it was hard to see how we could be certain all of it was working. You sometimes have to balance the maintenance side with the benefits."

Coming soon, says O'Neill, is the ability through the WI-FI system to upload images from the CCTV direct to the office, in real time, meaning the operator won't have to physically have the vehicle available to see what's been going on: "It's possible, but every now and then it pays to step back, slow down and look at what you want."

Depot security

Despite having had CCTV security in the depot for years, O'Neill says the latest systems are streets ahead.

"We are just upgrading now. The new system has infra-red colour cameras which can be tucked into any corner, and store the footage on a hard drive which can be interrogated from any computer, anywhere - even from a mobile phone."

Gate security at the depot is provided by a swipe-card system, but the gate can be released remotely: "There's a number any caller can use. We've had builders delivering materials late, and with this system the duty manager can let them in from home.

Office systems

The Kings Ferry has recently upgraded its Distinctive Systems software, using the hire and booking relational database programme, PHCS, and uploading its old records to Distinctive's VMS (vehicle management system).

"It's really solid, stable software that does 80% to 90% of what we want. Since Distinctive has built a big export market in America and Australia, it has helped them become much more adaptable - the philosophy seems to have changed, and now the programming is much more of an open architecture - meaning it can communicate with other companies' software, such as our tracking.

"I have very few criticisms. Maybe the users could be presented with less of the programme - our booking clerks don't have to see all of the functions. For that reason, the training regime has to be a bit more complicated that it need be. But Distinctive has reacted to that," says O'Neill.

Distinctive's addition of a web interface for its TBS tour booking system will be a boon for anyone with a holiday or excursion programme, allowing the new generation of 'silver surfers' to book and pay direct.

"But private hire will always be telephone territory," says O'Neill.

"Oddly enough, if we had a coach star rating system in this country, it would help customers know what they are booking. But as of now, it's a question of talking to the client and ensuring that what we supply meets their expectations."

Above: Commuter services are hungry for added-value extras like on-board Wi-Fi. Above right: The driver's area is rapidly becoming a hub of the new technologies – PDAs will be next for The Kings Ferry. Above left: Stylish interiors for commuters. Left: Once your vehicle is en route for Paris, do you really know where it is at any moment? That's the purpose of vehicle tracking. Below: In-office IT includes database-driven programming for bookings, maintenance, accounting and more – all integrated

The business case

It's a fact that technology is moving faster than ever. Everyone wants better technology, but the question is when to jump in and invest. O'Neill says it's down to you, not the salesmen.

"It is hard to draw a business case for technology. You can easily kid yourself that you're saving time or money, but it's actually very hard to cost.

"You may find after a period of using it that the figures remain the same - you haven't seen any change. But then there's an argument that things may have got worse without the IT."

The main aim should be to establish what you want from the technology before inviting the salesmen in.

"Sort out what you want first, then buy it when it becomes available.

"If your technology partner makes promises, build them into your contract - everything is possible, but you need to know what is certain. If the technology partner is struggling to achieve what you want then you've chosen the wrong partner. You need to hear positives from them, not problems.

"And always ask the difficult questions, get answers, and make a record of what was promised. Once the contract is signed, it's too late."

Tough CCTV – and it's British

Established in 2000, CSP Technology Ltd is one of the leading manufacturers of vandal-resistant CCTV cameras in the United Kingdom.

CSP offers a unique guarantee on its range: a 15 to 25 years guarantee on build quality. When it comes to design, and durability CSP Technology says it sets the benchmark.

Each CSP vandal-resistant cameras starts life as a solid block of aluminium, which is then machined and treated to six different processes to get a perfect finish. Mike Chapman, managing director, says: "It is far cheaper to make a cast aluminium camera but this is the only way we can guarantee a product will survive an attack and be fit for purpose. It's quite ironic, because a lot of imported cameras used in the CCTV industry do not use this method, yet claim to be vandal resistant."

The company offers a wide range of cameras for public transport applications including a variety of mini-domes available in different coloured metal finishes, designed to be installed between the ceiling skin within buses and coaches; and larger cameras to patrol access points.

CSP also offers bespoke solutions for customers who need special applications.

CSP cameras are used in a wide variety of applications and have even beenexported to Singapore for use in their state prison.

■ If you would like to become a trade partner, stockist or installer of CSP Technology CCTV systems, see *www.c-s-p.co.uk* or call 01724 276557.

Transport and Training offer a full service

Transport & Training Services Ltd has been trading since 1991, offering a range of training products including the National and International CPC qualifications for both freight and passenger, digital and analogue tachograph users; Working Time Directive and Drivers Hours Law combination courses and a range of other transport-related training courses.

Its Tachograph Analysis Bureau in Warrington, Cheshire, established in 1991 is now one of the biggest Tachograph Analysis Bureaux in the UK, regularly processing 150,000-plus charts per month.

The company has invested in the latest scanning and IT technology but its main asset is a team of highly-trained analysts who deliver consistently high quality of analysis for an increasing number of clients in the PSV industries.

The company can also supply all the necessary consumables for tachograph users. Typical consumables prices for operators are:

- Tachograph charts from £3.59 per box of 100
- Daily defect books from £1.80 each
- Tachograph envelopes from £32 per box 1000

Transport & Training Services also stock digital printer rolls, driver wallets and other transport consumables.

■ For more information, telephone 01925 243 500, fax: 01925 243 000, email: tachographsuk@aol.com, or visit website: *www.transporttrainingservices.com*

Safe, Secure CCTV!
ECLIPSE
If you value quality, strength and durability in security products, talk to CSP Technology; the market leader in professional vandal resistant CCTV products. Designed and assembled in Britain to the highest of standards, our range comes with a 25-year guarantee on build quality.
CSP TECHNOLOGY BUILD QUALITY 25 YEARS GUARANTEE
JUPITER
NEW
SATURN
NEW Stainless Steel
COMET
NEW
MICRODOME
ATOMIC
SATURN
CSP TECHNOLOGY
Made in England
UKAS
CE
FC
t. +44 (0) 1724 276557 | f. +44 (0) 1724 852795
e: sales@c-s-p.co.uk | www.c-s-p.co.uk

CCTV can help deal with a number of potentially damaging situations

LOOK CCTV
Setting the standards in transport CCTV

LOOK CCTV systems are high quality, digital CCTV systems.

With over 12,000 LOOK CCTV digital CCTV systems in operation every day across the UK, you can be confident in the quality of our installation and support.

When it comes to CCTV, let LOOK CCTV put you in the picture call 01253 891222.

LOOK CCTV

Unit 4, Wyrefields, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, FY6 8JX

LOOK who's in the lead

LOOK CCTV is among the UK's leading suppliers of high-quality digital CCTV systems.

From a standing start, it now has over 12,000 systems in operation every day, improving the security of drivers and many millions of passengers with high-resolution images and long recording times - all images are automatically watermarked for possible use in criminal prosecutions.

LOOK offers a broad range of cameras and recorders together with GPS (Global Positioning System) and wireless LAN capability. It says its commitment to excellence in systems integration allows it to offer tailored 'best-of-breed' CCTV systems to meet bus and coach operators' requirements.

"Moreover," says LOOK: "We are constantly refreshing our camera and recorder range against demanding performance standards in quality, reliability and on-going monitoring of service support requirements."

In Dundee, LOOK CCTV is an important element in the Dundee City's SmartBus integrated transport infrastructure. Dundee was the first city in Britain to have 100% CCTV coverage on its buses.

The CCTV systems have given Dundee City a step change improvement in bus driver and passenger safety. They have improved security on buses, encouraging more people to take more journeys on public transport and leave their cars at home.

LOOK CCTV is part of Quadnetics plc - a specialist in the design, integration and control of advanced CCTV and networked video systems for city centres, transport and security applications.

■ For more information contact LOOK CCTV on 01253 891222 or e-mail sales@lookcctv.com

uTrack: A real alternative!

uTrack, a software company based in Dublin, has grown a client base in Ireland and Northern Ireland are now providing their solutions to the rest of the UK.

They are specialists in providing a range of Internet-based solutions for coach and bus operators, based around the three core areas:

- Web Site Development and tailored Online Booking Systems.
- Software for managing all states of private hires, extended tours, regular contract work, community transport, regular and express services, including:

Quotation
Booking
Diary / Allocation
Work Tickets
Invoicing
Detailed Reporting.

- Real-time GPS tracking where operators can monitor their vehicles location, communicate with the driver safely as well as monitor driver hours, behaviour, fuel costs and mileage travelled.

What's different about uTrack's offering is that unlike traditional software companies, there is no large initial payment for the software, as it is Internet based and on monthly rental.

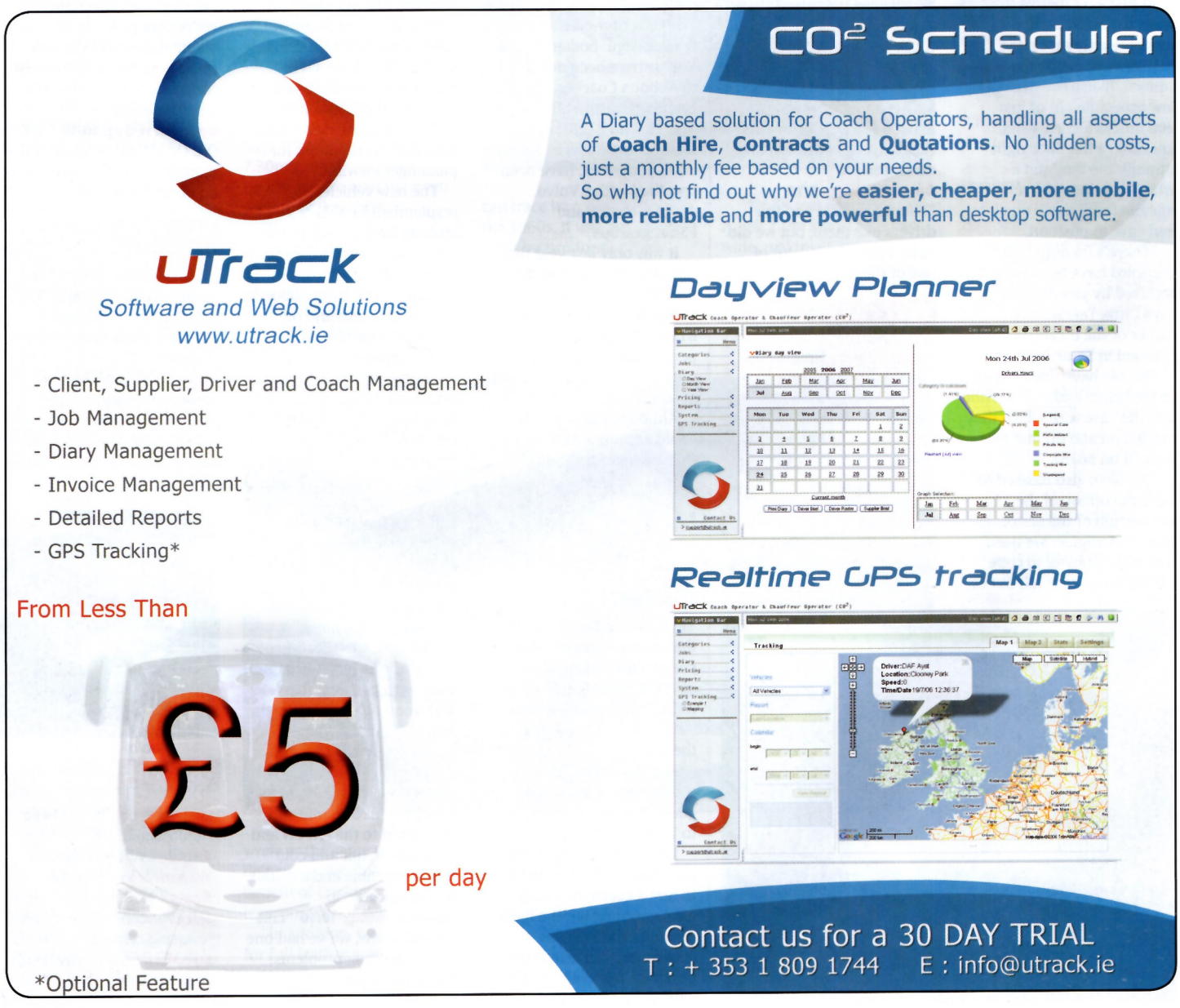
The software starts from less than £5 per day, and uTrack says operators can be up and running in just 10 minutes. Data is securely stored in a £20m server farm that's been in business for over 30 years and where there is 24/7 management of operator's information.

There is constant innovation within the products and generally new features are added weekly based on client's recommendations. uTrack does all the backups, so there's no major data loss regardless of if you computer crashes.

There's no installation, just a username and password that's encrypted along with your information. And no hidden costs!

Generally, operators get access to the account from anywhere in the world with an internet connection. The company claims have a solution for you whether you have three or 300 vehicles.

- Contact uTrack directly via email *info@utrack.ie* or on 00 353 1 8091744


CO² Scheduler
A Diary based solution for Coach Operators, handling all aspects of Coach Hire, Contracts and Quotations. No hidden costs, just a monthly fee based on your needs.
So why not find out why we're easier, cheaper, more mobile, more reliable and more powerful than desktop software.
uTrack
Software and Web Solutions
www.utrack.ie
- Client, Supplier, Driver and Coach Management
- Job Management
- Diary Management
- Invoice Management
- Detailed Reports
- GPS Tracking*
From Less Than
£5
per day
*Optional Feature
Dayview Planner
Realtime GPS tracking
Contact us for a 30 DAY TRIAL
T : + 353 1 809 1744 E : info@utrack.ie

Deliveries

Have you taken delivery of a new vehicle and want to tell the world about it? Email all the details and pictures to *cbwinbox@rouncymedia.co.uk* or write to the address on page 3

TW COACHES

For its first venture into daily stage carriage operation, TW Coaches of Devon has chosen a pair of Optare Solos. They are operating a six-days-a-week, 45-minute frequency service between Lynton, Lynmouth and Barnstaple on the North Devon coast.

The service was won under tender from Devon County Council, who also set the specification for the buses. They had to be lowfloor and fully DDA-compliant and they had to be narrow because of a restricted access point in the village of Parracombe.

At just 2.33 metres wide, the Solo Slimline model exactly meets the requirement set by the council. It also offers a low access height of just 200 mm (8 inches) when kneeling, a flat floor right through the bus, and a wheelchair bay with a manual ramp that's quick and easy to position.

"There's no doubt that the Solos have been well received by passengers," says Chris Tearall, a co-owner of the business, which is based in South Molton.

"People have reacted well to the bright and airy interior and the ease with which they can get on and off and move around on board.

"We were also pleased to have the option of the 110 kW version of the Mercedes-Benz 904 engine. We need that higher power to cope with a one-in-four hill out of Lynmouth that really tests the bus, particularly when fully laden. And we are very comfortable with Mercedes running units, as the majority of the 18 vehicles we now run are Merc-powered. We also expect longer life out of these higher-powered units."

TW Coaches took on two new drivers to operate the service, along with an existing employee. All three enjoy driving the Solos.

"They find the driving position is comfortable with excellent visibility and all controls are close to hand and instruments easy to read," said Mr Tearall.

The 8.5-metre Solos are fitted with Esteban Civic VO seats and have Mobitec LED destination equipment fitted to the front, rear and nearside. The driveline comprises the Mercedes-Benz OM904LA four-cylinder engine, matched to an Allison 2000 series five-speed automatic transmission.

Operator rating: 9/10
"They're reliable and the drivers like them, but we did have a skylight fall out of one of them."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Optare Solo (integral)
Engine Mercedes-Benz OM904LA
Transmission Allison 2000, five-speed auto
Seats 29
Spec Mobitech LED equipment
Supplied by Optare 0870 0330005

ABBOTTS COACHES

The UK's first-ever Sunsundegui-bodied tri-axle Volvos have been delivered to Abbotts Coaches of Leeming, North Yorkshire. The 13.75m B12Bs, which feature Sunsundegui Sideral 2000 bodywork, have been specified with a Volvo 420bhp engine and I-Shift gearbox.

It was only last year that Abbotts purchased its first new Volvos in 18 years – three Sunsundegui-bodied B12Bs. Delighted with their performance, the company opted for two more, but with extra capacity.

Although the new vehicles could accommodate 61 passengers, Abbotts have opted for a 57-seats configuration in order to maximize passenger comfort. The vehicles also feature full climate control, toilet, a hot and cold drinks facility, CD player, DVD player with one fixed and two drop-down monitors and GPS satellite navigation linked to the monitors for passenger viewing.

The new vehicles, resplendent in Abbott's striking livery, will join the others on a busy programme of UK tours and European holidays, both from Abbotts' own programme and on behalf of a number of major tour companies.

Partner, Clifford Abbott explained: "The Volvo-Sunsundegui combination works really well for us. The drivers are keen on the I-Shift in particular, while the passengers love the comfort, not to mention the eye-catching appearance. We're very proud to be taking delivery of the first tri-axles of this kind and are confident that there will be more to follow."

Operator rating: 10/10 "100% OK. One is out in Spain at the moment and there have been no problems whatsoever."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Volvo B12B/ Sunsundegui Sideral 2000
Engine Volvo 420 bhp
Transmission Volvo I-shift
Seats 57
Spec Satellite navigation linked to monitors
Supplied by Volvo Bus 01926 401777

HOWDEN COURT HOTEL

The Howden Court Hotel in the Devon resort of Torquay has recently taken delivery of this Bova Magiq HD 122-340XE, its first new coach – and the first of its kind in the area.

The hotel runs its own coach every week to pick up guests and bring them down to Torquay's 'Riviera'.

Peter Fannon, the hotel proprietor, said: "We used to hire a coach on a long-term contract, but the bank manager and I agreed it made more sense to actually purchase the asset. It's been with us for a few weeks now and it's a fantastic vehicle.

"It looks different with the picture of the hotel on the side and it's good because our regulars can see we're investing in the hotel."

The high specification of the vehicle includes 49 luxury seats with headrest flaps and wood-effect finish to the armrest and grab handles.

The coach has full air conditioning with winter protection, a centre sunken toilet, two LCD monitors connected to the PA, CD and DVD player, hot and cold drinks machine and a colour reversing camera.

Operator rating: 10/10 "Like anything new, we've had one or two teething problems, but Moseley has been very good."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Bova Magiq HD (integral)
Engine DAF xe 340bhp
Transmission ZF auto
Seats 49
Spec Air-con, LCD monitors, reversing camera
Supplied by Moseley South 01823 653000

JOHNSONS TOURS

Johnsons Tours of Worksop has recently placed in service its third and fourth new coaches of the year, with the addition of two Plaxton-bodied Iveco Euroriders.

Both vehicles have 57 Trent seats, the extensive cabin space available in the Paragon making it an ideal candidate for this configuration.

Owner Lee Johnson explained: "We have a strong demand from customers seeking 57-seat vehicles for both UK and continental trips. Most 57-seat coaches compromise the passenger legroom, but the amount of space available in the Paragon means legroom is very similar to that of a conventional 53-seat coach, which makes them the ideal choice for our operation."

The new vehicles bring the total number of Irisbus-Iveco Euroriders in the Johnsons fleet to seven.

"We first introduced the Eurorider about five years ago and it's proved to be ideal for the wide variety of work we do, it's easy to maintain, very good on fuel and the drivers like them. The Plaxton body is a great combination, the quality is as good as we see and with sound residuals, they represent excellent value for money," added Mr Johnson.

Johnsons runs more than 100 vehicles, with Volvos, Scanias and some Mercedes also running alongside the new Ivecos.

Operator rating: 10/10 "I can't knock them in any way. Their economy and efficiency have been terrific."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Irisbus-Iveco Eurorider/Plaxton Paragon
Engine Iveco 350bhp
Transmission ZF auto
Seats 57
Spec air con
Supplied by Plaxton 01909 551166

MUNROS

Two Plaxton Primos have been bought by Munro's of Jedburgh for operation on a largely rural service between Musselburgh and Dalkeith in East Lothian.

The Primos were purchased for a new service being funded by Midlothian Council. "Since we were launching a new service we thought it would be appropriate to use a new type of vehicle, which looks like a big bus rather than a minibus," Munro's Bruce Campbell explains.

"And, of course, it's like a big bus inside. We call it the Tardis," he adds.

The service links the towns of Musselburgh and Dalkeith, and also runs out to the village of Cousland, giving the Primos a real mix of operating terrain - from congestion in Musselburgh to narrow country lanes in the hills above Dalkeith.

The two Primos run six days a week from 7am to 7.30pm, and provide an hourly service over the main section of the route.

"We've had a great reaction from passengers and our drivers love them," says Mr Campbell.

Munro's is a long-established business, which can trace its roots back to the 1960s. It was bought in 1998 by two former First managers, and since then has steadily expanded - from eight vehicles to its present total of 40.

The 28-seat Plaxton Primo is just 7.9m long and 2.4m wide, making it ideal for use on routes where clearances are tight. It has a welded stainless-steel structure, and is powered by a 135bhp Cummins ISBe engine driving through an Allison 2000-series gearbox.

Operator rating: 9/10 "I'm pleased with the vehicles and pleased with the back-up."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Plaxton Primo integral
Engine Cummins ISBe 135bhp
Transmission Allison 2000
Seats 28
Spec Mobitech destination equipment
Supplied by Plaxton 01909 551166

ULSTERBUS TOURS

Extra legroom and fold down LCD screens are just two of the features of four new state-of-the-art coaches delivered this week to Ulsterbus Tours, Northern Ireland's only CoachMarque member.

Adrian Thompson, operations co-ordinator with Ulsterbus Tours, commented: "We are continually looking for ways to enhance our services and indeed give something back to our many committed regular customers by improving the level of interior luxury.

"As we take delivery of new coaches on a regular basis, this gave us the opportunity to modify our vehicle specification. To this end, we have increased the length of our coaches to 12.8m, retained the same number of rows, while at the same time delivering the ultimate benefit of creating more legroom for our customers.

"In addition, we opted for full leather seating and, to complete the higher luxury experience, we have also incorporated ceiling-mounted fold down LCD screens along the length of the coach.

"We also broke away from our traditional interior bright colours and chose a more sedate combination of navy with cream and tan to add an air of finesse."

Ulsterbus Tours again chose the Plaxton Panther body, however this time on the Volvo B12M, with mid-mounted engine for better weight distribution and improved road stability.

"We were delighted to go back to Plaxton again this year and we have not been disappointed with their impressive build quality and good after sales service," added Mr Thompson.

The four new coaches will operate to various European destinations as far afield as Tuscany in Italy as well as in the traditional destinations across the UK and Ireland.

Operator rating: 9/10 "They have very good build quality. The only problem so far has been with the DVD player."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Volvo B12M/ Plaxton Panther
Engine Volvo 12 litre
Transmission Volvo I-shift
Seats 48
Spec fold down LCD screens
Supplied by Plaxton 01909 551166

The training minefield

CTA plans for minibus driver training are a step forwards argues Steve Morison, director of Tangerine Training, but what are the risks?

There has been much discussion recently regarding the PCV Driving Test and the MiDas Scheme operated by the Community Transport Association (CTA).

I was a Driving Examiner with DSA for twenty years. I was responsible for the operational standards of all driving examiners in London and the South East. During my career I was also DSA's Training Manager, running their renowned Training Establishment at Cardington. Within Tangerine's portfolio I have undertaken PCV driver testing for some of the large bus operators. Added to this unique experience and qualifications is now my MiDAS Driver Assessor/Trainer Certificate (DAT). I support the CTA in its aim to promote a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers within the volunteer sector who are not required to undertake the statutory PCV Driving Test

The five days DAT training that I received from Lambeth & Southwark Community Transport, a CTA appointed training agent, in respect of the safe operation of a minibus and additional skills needed if passengers in wheelchairs are carried, was excellent. The course equipped me with the knowledge and understanding to pass on best practice to others. The time allotted to driving assessment doesn't compare to the in-depth training that a Driving Standards Agency examiner undertakes but goes someway to setting a uniform standard. The course not only covered the detailed requirements of the MiDAS on-road assessment, it also covered defensive driving, vehicle and equipment familiarization, vehicle evacuation procedures and much more.

Minibus drivers require proper training

All DSA examiners undertake a minimum of four weeks training to become a car examiner. When they have consistently over time demonstrated their assessment skill and following another four weeks training, selected examiners move on to be PCV examiners. MiDAS operates on a 'cascade' approach. After training a DAT can assess other minibus drivers' competence. To become a DAT you have to be an 'above average' driver and meet the outcomes of a course lasting four days for standard minibuses and a further day for wheelchair accessible minibuses. Each DAT is given a very comprehensive trainer's manual and a certificate that is valid for two years after which refresher training is required.

DSA examiners and company Delegated Driving Examiners do not normally undertake refreshers so frequently but are subjected to a fairly robust supervision and quality assurance regime. Examiners are regularly accompanied on test by line management and/or a quality assurance team. All their test reports are monitored for abnormal trends.

DATs are not only driving assessors, they are trainers. Under Road Traffic Act 1988, it is illegal to give paid minibus (under 2540Kg) driving instruction if you are not a DSA Approved Driving Instructor or a trainee ADI. This would include giving driving instruction to a fellow employee within the same local authority if you are being paid to undertake these duties. DATs who are not qualified ADIs must limit their role to driving assessing and non-driving training sessions, e.g. passenger awareness, legal requirements for drivers, passenger safety equipment, breakdown, accident and emergency procedures.

Clearly MiDAS minibus drivers are better prepared to drive a minibus than the untrained. Some may well be up to the standard to pass a DSA PCV test. MiDAS was introduced to try and set a standard for the volunteer sector. As a DAT at least you have undertaken some formal instructional training, whereas many current PCV instructors, including those working for large bus and coach operators are just experienced PCV drivers with no other qualification or further training. At the moment they do not need any formal instructional qualification but that will soon be changing. ■ Read Steve's article next month to find out more.

tangerine
your transport training partner
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
0845 402 3717
Or Email: sales@tangerine.uk.com
Or visit: www.tangerine.uk.com
Tangerine offers a full range of cutting-edge Driver, Instructor, and Management Training. As the Driver Quality Monitoring market leaders we have helped operators reduce their accident rates by up to 17%. **Call us for a free trial!**
We Offer:
• Driver Quality Monitoring
• Driver Instructor Training
• Garage Trainer Training
• Driver Training & Development
• Transport Management Training

Ulsterbus retains people award

Ulsterbus's David Leatham

Ulsterbus Tours of Northern Ireland has retained its coveted Investor in People (IIP) status and remains one of the few British coach operators to hold the prestigious award, which follows exhaustive independent assessment.

IIP assessor, Ronnie Hillen, who reviewed Ulsterbus Tours' suitability to be granted IIP recognition, was particularly impressed by the company's driver training programme.

He also commented favourably on the business, which has achieved high standards of customer service and developed a significant portfolio of products, including tours throughout Europe.

Ulsterbus Tours Manager, David Leathem said: "We are extremely proud to be one of the very few coach operators in the UK to achieve IIP accreditation. To this end we are delighted that the way in which the business has been developed in recent years has once again been recognised through our retaining this prestigious IIP standard.

"I believe it is now more important than ever for our industry to set the highest standards. The coach business is extremely competitive and customers are far more discerning. We are committed to all our employees by fully involving them in the running of the business, resulting in a positive

New director general for Tyne and Wear

The Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority has appointed Bernard Garner as the new director general of Nexus. Mr Garner has been acting director general since the departure of Mike Parker last month.

Cllr David Wood, chairman of the PTA, said: "I am delighted to be able to announce Bernard as the new director general. He is an excellent candidate and was the unanimous choice of PTA members.

"Bernard proved the ideal man to take Nexus forward in the coming years."

Mr Garner was chosen following a national search

for one of the most high-profile jobs in transport in the north-east. His appointment was ratified at a special meeting of the PTA.

He took up his new post on Monday, August 7, heading an organisation of 1,100 people with an annual turnover of £100m, responsible for the operation of the Tyne and Wear Metro, the Shields Ferry, and for the planning, procurement and provision of transport across Tyne and Wear.

Bernard said: "The next few years will be an exciting time for public transport in Tyne and Wear and I am extremely proud to have been chosen as the person to lead Nexus. I will be building on firm foundations and a track record of successful delivery that has served the passenger well."

Bernard is a qualified civil engineer and member of the Institution of Civil Engineers since 1976. Among external posts, he is a director of the North East Transport Information Service and chair of both the national Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) Planning Committee and European Committee.

Alan White

Moseley South appoints sales director

Moseley in the South Ltd of Wellington, Somerset, has announced the appointment of Alan White to the role of sales director. Alan will report to the managing director, Allan Vaulter, and will be responsible for co-ordinating all aspects of the business, with an emphasis on the growth of coach sales activities in the south of England and Wales.

Alan brings a wealth of experience to the role. His career in the industry started with a coachbuilding apprenticeship in the 70s with the now-defunct Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, and most recently included a ten-year tenure with Moseley PCV, an associated company of Moseley in The South, as sales manager.

Allan Vaulter, commenting on the appointment said: "Alan has proven ability within our organisation. As well as established relationships with our suppliers and a large sector of our client base, Alan has the enthusiasm, integrity and work ethic required to take this business forward."

Operations Manager - Aberdeen

As a result of the existing postholder advancing his career within Stagecoach, a vacancy has arisen for an enthusiastic, capable and focussed Manager to take on the exciting and challenging role of Operations Manager. The role is with Stagecoach Bluebird and is based in Aberdeen, a vibrant regional centre, with a high quality of life.

The post involves responsibility for 4 main depots and 4 further operating centres. The principal operations are commercial and tendered local bus services, school contracts and Megabus coach services. Two Local Authorities and one Statutory Regional Transport Partnership are amongst key external stakeholders.

A total of 240 drivers and 156 vehicles are required, and annual turnover is in the region of £12m.

The successful candidate will be motivated by improving operational and financial performance, achieving high standards of service delivery and customer satisfaction, and motivating a large workforce, whilst developing internal and external relationships. Success in this position ought to lead to further career advancement within a reasonable timeframe.

An attractive package is on offer to the right candidate, including a Company Car and assistance with relocation expenses, if appropriate.

Please apply in writing, giving full career details, to:

Mr Charlie Mullen, Managing Director, Stagecoach Bluebird, Bus Station, Guild Street, Aberdeen AB11 6GR. For an informal discussion or for further information, please contact Charlie on 01224 591381. The closing date for applications is Friday 11 August 2006.

Stagecoach www.stagecoachbus.com

COACH

Manufacturer	July 06	July 05	YTD 06	YTD 05
VolvoBus	43	18	307	277
Scania	4	9	139	102
Bova	0	7	66	54
Irisbus	12	16	59	128
Setra	17	4	61	39
Mercedes-Benz	17	0	48	19
MAN	12	1	31	24
Sitcar	4	1	27	21
VDL Bus	10	1	25	25
Caetano Toyota	0	0	10	25
Van Hool	1	0	8	5
Alexander Dennis	0	1	6	14
BMC	4	0	8	12
Temsa	0	0	2	2
DAF Bus	0	0	1	3
Transbus	0	0	0	3
Other British	1	0	2	0
Other imports	2	2	4	44
Total	127	60	804	797

BUS

Manufacturer	July 06	July 05	YTD 06	YTD 05
Alexander Dennis	59	37	500	390
VolvoBus	107	48	418	554
Optare	72	46	290	298
Scania	29	33	163	180
VDL Bus	34	3	134	71
MAN	3	1	96	20
Irisbus	9	10	146	88
Mercedes-Benz	8	2	68	45
BMC	6	3	67	45
Autosan	0	0	16	0
Transbus	0	0	0	11
DAF Bus	1	0	5	0
Other British	7	0	14	0
Other imports	2	0	11	2
Total	337	183	1928	1704

COACH AND BUS

Manufacturer	July 06	July 05	YTD 06	YTD 05
Volvo Bus	150	66	725	831
Alexander Dennis	59	38	506	404
Scania	33	42	302	282
Optare	72	46	290	298
Irisbus	21	26	205	216
MAN	15	2	127	44
VDL Bus	44	4	159	96
Mercedes-Benz	25	2	116	64
BMC	12	3	75	57
Bova	0	7	66	54
Van Hool	1	0	8	5
DAF Bus	1	0	6	3
Transbus	0	0	0	14
Other British	8	0	16	0
Other Imports	21	7	131	133
Total	462	243	2732	2501

Latest registrations: Lull before the storm

Quiet July ahead of September storm

July was a quiet month for new registrations but the SMMT is predicting a storm of activity as operators rush to beat the registration deadline for Euro 3 compliant coaches on October 1.

"2006 registrations look good despite a quiet July," said Christopher Macgowan, SMMT chief executive. "July is a month which typically takes 7.5% of annual registrations. This means we are on par with 2005 volumes. We expect even higher figures in August and a storm in September as operators rush to register Euro 3 coaches ahead of the change to Euro 4 on October 1. Despite these distortions, we're optimistic about year-end figures."

THE COACHMAN

JULY SALES REPORT

As would be expected for this time of year everybody is busy operating their vehicles and there is precious little time available for carrying out any unforced fleet changes. However, there are always people who 'buck the trend', perhaps in the belief that they will get a better deal by buying at the time of year when the dealers would expect to be quiet. They may have a point. Reports indicate that July was a reasonable month for the sale of fairly late (2000 onwards) touring vehicles, carrying on from the same situation in June as previously reported. One wonders whether coaches that do not conform to Euro 3 will continue to be in demand as the London LEZ gets closer. This could of course help sales of vehicles registered from late 2001 onwards but may lead to a glut of Euro 2 vehicles being offered on the market as people want to upgrade. Time will tell.

Sales of older vehicles appear to have been slow with the exception of units up to £20,000, most of these being emergency cover for newer vehicles that are off the road due to accident or major component failure. This is not an unusual trend and helps the dealers move some of the older stock out of the yard.

Overall it seems that July was a better than average month for used coach sales, but bear in mind that dealers budget for a dramatic reduction anyway so it is not difficult to beat the target.

For some years now there has been a noticeable increase in the volume of enquiries coming from the Republic of Ireland and this seems to show no sign of abating. Interestingly, the majority of vehicles being looked for are at completely opposite ends of the scale being either up to 2 years old (due to the tax situation regarding anything over that age) or really cheap contract vehicles. Unfortunately there has always been a problem overcoming the difference between the UK understanding and the Irish understanding of the word cheap! However, with a bit of effort from both sides this anomaly can sometimes be sorted out and a deal agreed.

There seems to be a feeling amongst some dealers that 2007 may not be a good year for new vehicle registrations. Perhaps digital tachographs are something that a lot of people will want to avoid for longer yet and this may well push smaller operators into buying very late vehicles at the expense of new. That would be good news for the larger operations that update their fleet on a 2 or 3 year cycle. It will be interesting to see what happens.

In the dealers' yards...

The used stock built up as new deliveries made way for used part-exchange vehicles diminished rapidly once the schools broke for summer.

Plaxton Coach Sales, Anston: **"After a pretty bleak three or four weeks, business has been brisk," said Plaxton's sales and marketing manager Andy Warrender from its Anston sales operation. "It's what we'd expect. We've shifted so many vehicles we're now a bit tight for stock.**

"The vehicles that have been selling have been '95 to 2000s, most straight seated but some execs. We've got a lot of interest at the moment in four ex-Parks of Hamilton automatic Paragons, with 49 to 57 seats.

"We're also getting a lot of calls for 70-seat Profiles, and we're now building some new for stock ready for the start of the next school term," said Mr Warrender.

Moseley PCV, Pontefract: **Director Karl Moseley says the used stock is now in the low 40s: "That's quite respectable considering the number of new we sold this year and what we took in part exchange. The big story here is that we've been converting '95 Futuras to 70 seats, and they look like selling very well.**

"I must credit Jim Tweedie at our Scots sales operation with some of the initiative. The first was converted by Cogent with new seats, and we're really pleased with the result. The next will be built by us with Cogent seating, but Cogent will get the one after that to do," said Mr Moseley.

"We'll take part exchange for the right vehicle, but at £55,000 operators will understand that we'd prefer a straight deal. Later this year, we'll be getting new Bova FLDs with 70 seats – we'll have prices on those later."

COACH+BUS BUYER

1ST FOR VEHICLE SALES

The ESSENTIAL way to sell your vehicle, product or service to the coach and bus industry

VEHICLE SALES

Full page £700
Half page £400
Quarter page £250

RECRUITMENT +TENDERS

£35 **per single column cm**

PRODUCTS +SERVICES

*minimum 3cm
Series discounts
3 inserts **5%**
6 inserts **10%**
12 inserts **15%**

Only **£10** per single column cm*

All vehicle sales and recruitment ads will appear on our website www.cbwnet.co.uk for one week...

FREE OF CHARGE

Email your copy to cbb@rouncymedia.co.uk
OR
Fax 0845 2802927

Linage Ad

Mercedes-Benz 609 1994 with turbo. 24 seater, three point belts, no boot. Contract maintained. Tested until August 2006. **£5,500** + VAT. 01234 567890. Peterborough

Only **£20** min 20 words*

* 50p per word thereafter

Mercedes-Benz 609 1994 with turbo. 24 seater, three point belts, no boot. Contract maintained. Tested until August 2006. **£5,500** + VAT. 01234 567890. Peterborough

(with tint)

Only **£25** min 20 words*

For Recruitment and Tenders call Gary on **01733 293247**
Recruitment and Tenders deadline 12pm Monday

For Products and Services call James on **01733 293249**
Products and Services deadline 5pm Friday

For Vehicle Sales call Beth on **01733 293480**
Vehicle Sales deadline 3 pm Monday

All prices subject to VAT

TESTIMONIALS

"We sold our minibus to the first person who rang, we had a good response overall and were pleased with the way things went."

Paul and Carol Tallents

"Thank you very much for the ad of our coach. We managed to sell it in the first week of advertising. We shall use CBW again."

Raymond, Dennis Carter LTD

Ensignbus

DOUBLE DECKER SPECIALIST

1994 -96 L-M REG MERCEDES 709'S
Manuals, 23/25 seats. Starting from £3500.

1991 H REG DENNIS DOMINATOR
Gardner 6LXB/Voith 4 speed automatic (55mph), East Lancs low height body, 13ft 8in, 76 seats.

1989 F REG LEYLAND OLYMPIANS
Cummins L10/ZF, Northern Counties semi low

1988 F REG LEYLAND OLYMPIANS
Gardner 6LXB/ZF, LWB, Alexander low height bodies, 87 seaters, only 2 available.

1998 R REG NEOPLAN
Transliner, air-con, toilet , 49 recliners, new MOT.

1988 E REG LEYLAND OLYMPIANS,
Hydracyclic, Optare bodies, single door, 68 seats, from a very good home.

1994 L REG DENNIS LANCES
Cummins/ZF, East Lancs bodies, 48 seaters, superb condition.

1991-92 LEYLAND OLYMPIANS
Cummins L10/ZF, Alexander R type bodies, either 74 seat dual door or 78 single door, large choice

1997 P REG MCW METRORIDER
25 seaters, large selection

1995 M REG VOLVO B6'S,
Volvo engines, ZF gearboxes, Alexander 40-seat bodies, good selection

1987 E REG LEYLAND OLYMPIAN
Gardner/Hydracyclic, 70 seats, test 04/07

1989 PP DENNIS CONDORS
Gardner/Voith, Duple Metsec bodies, 2 door, 106 seaters

1989 G REG OPTARE DELTA'S
DAF SB220's, ZF automatics, 49 seaters.

ONLY 3 LEFT

1997 P REG VOLVO OLYMPIANS,
Alexander bodies, 2 doors, 68 seats, or can be single doored and upseated to 78

1995 M REG VOLVO OLYMPIAN,
Volvo/Voith, Alexander body, 82 seats , new test.

1990 DENNIS CONDORS,
Arriving now from Hong Kong. Cummins L10 engines, Voith 3 speed auto gearboxes, tinted windows, full air-con throughout, 94 seats with 2 doors or 95 with single door conversion. Refurbished to Firstgroup spec 4 years ago. Limited number available.

1995 DENNIS DART
Cummins/Allison, Plaxton Pointer , 40 seats, test 04/07.

1986 C REG LEYLAND OLYMPIANS
ECW Lowheight bodies, 77 seats, Cummins L10 engines, Voith 4 speed gearboxes (60mph)

1986/7 LEYLAND OLYMPIANS
Gardner/hydracyclic, ECW semi-low height bodies, 68 seats, long tests, some single door, 72 seaters also available

1991/2 H/J REG DENNIS DOMINATORS
Garner 6LXCT/Voith 4 speed (65mph) East Lancs 80 seat bodies, superb condition.

OPEN TOP BUSES A SPECIALITY BRITAIN'S BIGGEST BUS DEALERS

Juliette Close, Purfleet Industrial Park, Purfleet, Essex, RM15 4YF

Telephone 01708 865656 Fax: 01708 864340 e-mail: sales@ensignbus.com

Visit our website for current stock at www.ensignbus.com

Finance may be arranged by our Associate Company on Buses, Coaches, Workshops & Buildings

Blythswood Motors

For information please visit our website : www.blythswoodmotors.co.uk
or email : blythswoodmotors@aol.com
or call on : 0141 221 3165 / evenings 0141 639 6107 fax : 0141 221 3172
Address : Office & Showroom 1175 Argyle Street, Glasgow G3 8TQ

New Yard Directions
M8 to Junction 27 Paisley/ Renfrew at roundabout go back on yourselves onto Renfrew Road, Next roundabout follow signs for Westway with Fire Station on your right, turn left into Porterfield Road then turn left into Westway Ind Estate PA4 8DJ

Super Low Floor

Neoplans

1999 45+25 Upgraded Seats, Cummins ZF, 11.7m, Retrimmed, Auto Not High Mileage **Good Motorway Bus Fast**

Dennis Darts

1999 10.7m Marshall 43+19 Above average condition

2000 Plaxton 8.8m 29 Upgraded Seats, Works Works Engine

Super Low Floor

Optare Solo Mini

2000 & 2001 Mercedes Engine, 26/29 or 29/22 Seats, Auto Allison, Tested **ABOVE AVERAGE**

Optare Excel

11.5m, 1998,Cummins Engine, 45/21 Upgraded Seats, Tested, Interior & Exterior Exceptional **LOOKS GREAT**

Super Low Floor

Alero

2002 to 2004 Roll On Roll Off, Local Authority Contracts Part Service, Fully Tracked Up to 16 + Wheelchair, Air Con, Luxury Destination

Volvo B6 Alexander

1993 40+19 Service Seats, Destination, Diptac Poles, Telma, Fully ZF Auto, Kneeling

STAR BUY
Alexander Dennis ZF Auto 1992, Cummins, 48 Seats, This is the **BUY of the YEAR**
Average condition

Sale Sale Sale Sale Sale Sale

Leyland Daf

1998 to New Factory & Front Entry, Power Door, Low & High Roof, 16 Seats, Long & Extra Long, Wheelchair & Service, Available

Dennis Alexander

8.2 Cummins ZF 1992, 48 Seats, Will up seat, very economical, 12 Metre Tested Only £8000.00

Mercedes Service Buses 709D - 811D Some Auto 814 Plaxton : Alexander: Marshall.....From £3000.00

Mercedes 24 Seat Coach From £8000.00
Good runners & Most Tested

Volvo B6 Alexander Service Bus Recon Engine & ZF By Manufacturers

Iveco Marshall Air Suspension, Telma Good Buy.....£6000.00

Choice of 31 Double Deck - Ready to Work
Choice of Scania, Leyland Lions, Metrobus, Metroliner & MCW from 72 to 86 Seats
We can arrange Delivery to your Door £ 175.00 + Fuel

Open Tops

Metroliner
1985-86 84 Seats Cummins ZF, Tested Only £ 5000.00 Tri-axle Available Now

Metrobus

71 Seats on Air Suspension, Auto Tested Only £ 5000.00 Choice Available Hard Tops

New & Used Mercedes Vans

Ready for Conversion
All Sizes up to 28 Seats In Stock Now
Used Transits New Shape
NOW CHOICE OF FIVE

Bargain Coaches

Up to 70 Seats or Buy To Convert, Choice Plaxton 3200 & 3500, Choice Tiger or Cummins ZF & Choice Duple & Auto ZF - All Cheap Very Good

Mercedes 814D

Choice of New 24 Seat, Luxury, Power Door, 22 mpg, For only £ 44000.00
Manual Door only £ 42000.00
All Non-Digital Pre Registered

Sprinters 311 16 Seat PSV
Only £ 26500.00 3 Yrs Merc Warranty

Ford Tourneo / Transit

Ford Tourneo GLS £13000.00 Ramp
2004 GLS 9 Seat In Silver only 11000m

Transit

Available New Early 17 Seats 140 Engine Electric Windows & Mirrors, Manufacturers Warranty, Now Early Delivery

2003 & 2004 17 Seats
1994 / 1997 Great Choice from £ 2000.00

Wheelchair Stock

Mercedes 814D New 32 Hiback Seats, Flat Floor up to 10 Wheelchairs, Auto, Stock
Mercedes 814D New 23/5 w/c, Side Lift, Boot
Mercedes 614D 16 / 24 Coach Seats, 3 /5 w/c
Mercedes 413D 16 up to 5 w/c ***New & Used***
Mercedes Vito 8 + Driver up to 3 w/c also Volkswagen or Ford
Leyland 16 Seats, Under floor Lift, Luxury Extra Long, Power Door

Mercedes Vito

Most Spec and Colours available from Stock also Auto Extra Long 9 Seats Also VW Caravelle

Used 1999 Auto 110
Used 2001 108
Used 2004 Extra Long 8500m only
Used 2005 111 Extra Long

Mercedes Service

New Dual Purpose, 33 Seats, Auto or Manual, Kneeling **Used Available**
New DDA 32 Seats, Belts, Auto, Lift, up to 10 W/C's, Flat Floor - stock
New Beaver Plus 2 Plus 33 Highback Coach Seat, Luggage Racks & Boot **Used available**
New Beaver Service 29 Seats + Pen DDA Manual
Choice of 709 / 811 / 814 Vario up to 1999 all ready to work Now

SCOOP PURCHASE

Alexander Dennis 48 Service Cummins, 8.3m, ZF & Telma NOW ONLY £8000.00

Mercedes 16 Seater

Sprinters Sprinters
New and Used
Special Reduced New
Only £ 26500.00 with
3 Years Warranty Guaranteed

Luxury Front Entry Panoramic Windows

New 413D Luxury 16 Seat, Boot, DVD, Luxury
New Luxury 16 Seat, Boot, non Extended
New 413D Wheelchair Accessible 16 Seat
2001 411D Wheelchair Accessible 16/5 wheelchair low mileage

Mercedes Cheetah

33 Highback Coach Seats & Boot 29 & Jumbo

All with Luxury Coach Seats, Double Glazed, Retarder, Large Boot, Choice of Auto or ZF, Adjustable Footrests, 20 MPG, Choice of Interior Colour
Good selection of used available

Good Choice of used available

Mercedes 814D Cheetah

25 Hiback Reclining Seats, 2 Tables, Power Door Jumbo Size Boot

Mercedes 24 Seat

Choice New Luxury Power Door, Large Boot Also choice of welfare 24/6 w/c's or 23 Luxury side Lift 6 w/c's & Boot & 9 Used

Mercedes 311 or 413

Bargain Price £ 26500.00

311D 16 Seats, Racks, Panoramic Windows, Mercedes 3 years warranty

413D 16 Luxury Seats, Reading Lights, Forced Air, Boot, Coach Back End & W/C

Mercedes 23 Seater

23 Highback Removable Coach Seats, 5 Wheelchairs, Telma, Belts, Dropwell Boot, Slam Door As Above in Build also Mercedes 32 Coach Seats, Flat Floor Up to 10 wheelchairs, Auto In stock

Great Offers on Coaches

Iveco Beulas

1998

49 Coach Seats, Air Con, 8 Speed, Belts, Centre Toilet, TV & Video

Volvo Plaxton

1990

B10M 53 Seats, Telma, Forced Air, Double Glazed, Belts, Curtains, Courier Seat, PA

Coaches Coaches Coaches

Iveco Beulas 1998 49 Seats, Toilet, 8 Speed
Neoplan 1996 49 Seats, Air Con, Cummins
Neoplan 1998 49 Seats, Toilet, Air Con
Javelin Duple Body, 1990 57 Seats, Cummins
Javelin 1992 46 Seats, Cummins, low mileage
Javelin 1992 70 Seats, Belts, Cummins
Javelin 1993 42 Seats, Cummins, Air Con
Setra 1985 49/53 Seats, Toilet, £ 5000.00
BMC 2003 35 Seats, Air Con, Luxury
Setra 1987 35 Seats, Toilet
Volvo B10M 1995 49 Seat, Toilet, Luxury
Volvo B10M Vanhool 1999 49 Seats, Air Con
Volvo Plaxton 1990 53 Seats, PA, Luxury
Tiger Duple 320 1987 57 Seats, Boot.....£6000
Tiger Plaxton 1988 51 Seat, Toilet, ZF Auto...£ 7000
Tiger Plaxton 1992 53 Seats, ZF, Cummins...£ 9000

Ayat Double Deck Triaxle

2001

73 Recliners, Low Mileage, Double Stairs, Toilet, TV, PA, Fridge etc

Neoplan

1996 & 1998

49 Coach Seats Cummins Engine Centre Toilet, 12M Full Executive Air Con

Volvo Plaxton Premier

1995

Belts, Centre Toilet Double Glazed PA, Courier Seat, Fridge, Boiler, TV etc

Vanhool Triaxle B10

1999

49 Toilet, Double Glazing, Fridge, Boiler, TV, PA, Courier & Air Con Volvo easy shift silver exterior

H.W. Pickrell

MINIBUS AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

Gardiners Lane North • Crays Hill • Billericay • Essex • CM11 2XE

Telephone: Day (01268) 521033 • Mobile: 07860 894331 • Fax: (01268) 284951 • Email: sales@hwpickrell.co.uk

Website: www.hwpickrell.co.uk

Retail Motor Industry Federation

FINANCE AVAILABLE ON THE ABOVE VEHICLES (SUBJECT TO STATUS) VAT ELEMENT ONLY REQUIRED AS DEPOSIT, BALANCE OVER 48 MONTHS (Written details on request)

51 REG IVECO 40.C11 209 TURBO DIESEL

51 REG, IVECO 40.C11 2.9 TURBO DIESEL IRIS CONVERSION 16 LUXURY HIGH BACK SEATS. SLAM DOOR FRONT ENTRANCE WITH LOW STEP, HIGH ROOF, BONDED WINDOWS, LOW MILES 75,000 KMS ONE OWNER EX NHS TRUST. NEW CIOF,

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER , SM33, 2.2 DCI 5 SPEED, PAS, SWB, ATLAS CONVERSION SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH AVS STEP, 8 SEATS OR 4 PLUS 2 WHEELCHAIR SPACES, RICON TAIL LIFT, UNWIN TRACKING, MINT CONDITION ONE OWNER LOW MILES

51 REG FIAT DUCATO 2.8 TD PAS

51 REG FIAT DUCATO 2.8 TD, PAS, MOBILE OFFICE / CLINIC / TREATMENT CENTRE/ EXPO UNIT, SEPARATE KITCHIN FITTED WITH MICROWAVE,SINK & FRIDGE, TOILET,FULL AIR CON AND HEATING, SILENT RUNNING GENERATOR, AWNING FITTED ON N/S,SECURITY ENTRY & ALARM SYSTEM, SIDE & REAR ENTRANCE DOOR WITH STEP AND RAMP AT REAR FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESS, ONE OWNER, EX LOCAL AUTHORITY,9,900 MILES ONLY,COST OVER £70,000 NEW

2000 X REG FORD TRANSIT 150 DIESEL

5 SPEED MANUAL, LONG WHEEL BASE, PAS, HIGH ROOF, HIGH SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH LOW STEP, 8 HIGH BACK SEATS, UNWIN TRACKING FOR W/ CHAIRS, RICON TAIL LIFT, ONE OWNER, LOW MILES, 36,000 MILES

S REG FORD TRANSIT

S REG FORD TRANSIT CHASSIS DEVELOPMENT COACHBUILT, 230,DIESEL, 5 SPEED MANUAL, LWB, PAS, NEAR SIDE ELECTRIC DOOR ,12 ABACUS HIGH BACK SEATS FITTED TO UNWIN TRACKING RICON TAIL LIFT,ONE OWNER EX LOCAL AUTHORITY,CHOICE OF FOUR,

94/95 M REG MERCEDES 609/709

94/95 M REG MERCEDES 609 & 709, CUNLIFFE CONVERSION, LONG WHEEL BASE HIGH ROOF, 10 TO 24 SEMI HIGH BACK SEAT'S PLUS WHEEL CHAIRS, UNWIN TRACKING, RICON TAIL LIFT, FRONT ENTRY POWER DOOR WITH FOLD DOWN STEP, EX LOCAL AUTHORITY

2001 Y REG FORD TRANSIT

2001 Y REG FORD TRANSIT NEW SHAPE 330,DIESEL, 5 SPEED MANUAL, MWB, PAS, MEDIUM ROOF, SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 8 HIGH BACK SEATS, UNWIN TRACKING FOR W/CHAIRS, RICON TAIL LIFT,ONE OWNER, LOW MILES 33,000 MILES

2001 Y REG TOYOTA HIACE

2001 Y REG TOYOTA HIACE , 2.4 DIESEL ,5 SPEED ,PAS, AIR CON, BUS CONVERSION SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 3 SEATS PLUS DRIVER PLUS W/CAIR RICON TAIL LIFT, 33,500 MILES. V GOOD CONDITION

P REG FIAT FLORINO

P REG FIAT FLORINO, 1.7 DIESEL, 5 SPEED MANUAL, HIGH ROOF VAN CONVERSION, 4 SEMI HIGH BACK SEATS INCLUDING DRIVER ,UNWIN TRACKING FOR 1 WHEELCHAIR FOLD DOWN REAR RAMP, EX CHARITY, VERY LOW MILES 26,000 MILES ONLY

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER, LM35, 2.2 DCI, 5 SPEED ,PAS, LWB, O & H CONVERSION, SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 12 SEATS OR 8 PLUS 3 WHEELCHAIR SPACES, LOWERING SUSPENSION & FOLD DOWN RAMP, UNWIN TRACKING, LOW MILES

1999 T REG RENAULT MASTER

1999 T REG RENAULT MASTER , LM33, 2.5 DIESEL ,5 SPEED ,PAS, LWB, O&H CONVERSION SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH AVS STEP, 8 SEATS OR 4 PLUS 2 WHEELCHAIR SPACES, RICON TAIL LIFT, UNWIN TRACKING, MINT CONDITION ONE OWNER LOW MILES

S REG 2000 IVECO TURBO DAILY

S REG 2000 IVECO TURBO DAILY 59.12 2.8 TD,MANUAL, P A S, LEICESTER BODY COACH, 24 REMOVABLE HIGH BACK SEAT'S, UNWIN TRACKING, PLS UNDERFLOOR TAIL LIFT, POWER DOOR FRONT ENTRY,ONE OWNER, 88,500 KMS

2001 Y REG FIAT DUCATO

2001 Y REG FIAT DUCATO 2.8 TD, MANUAL, PAS, LWB, HIGH ROOF, EUROMOTIVE CONVERSION, 12 REMOVABLE HIGH BACK SEAT'S PLUS SPACE FOR 2 W/CAIRS, UNWIN TRACKING, RICON TAIL LIFT, SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, ONE OWNER, EX LOCAL AUTHORITY, 32,000 MILES

02 REG 2002 RENAULT MASTER

02 REG 2002 RENAULT MASTER, LM35, 2.5, 5 SPEED, PAS, LWB, WARNERBUS CONVERSION, SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH AVS STEP, 8 - 14 HIGH BACK REMOVABLE SEATS, UNWIN TRACKING, RICON TAIL LIFT, MINT CONDITION ONE OWNER EX NHS.

W REG 2000 IVECO TURBO DAILY

W REG 2000 IVECO TURBO DAILY 59.12 2.8 TD, MANUAL, PAS, MELLOR BODY COACH, 24 REMOVABLE HIGH BACK SEAT'S, UNWIN TRACKING, RICON UNDERFLOOR TAIL LIFT, POWER DOOR FRONT ENTRY, ONE OWNER, 101,500 KMS CHOICE OF 2

NEW 06 REG, IVECO 40.C13

2.9 TURBO DIESEL IRIS CONVERSION 14 HIGH BACK COGENT SEATS. DOUBLE FRONT PASSENGER SEAT, SIDE-LOADING DOOR WITH AVS STEP, HIGH ROOF, M2 FLOOR, LOTS OF SPACE, DELIVERY MILEAGE ONLY, IN STOCK

V REG MERCEDES SPRINTER

V REG,MERCEDES SPRINTER 412D, 2.8 TURBO DIESEL,UVG PREMIER BODY, PAS, LWB, SIDE DOOR, TWIN YORK 4 STRETCHERS, WITH SEAT BACKS, BULK HEAD DOOR, EBERSPACHER HEATER, AIR SUSPENSION, STROBE BLUES & SIREN,ONE OWNER, GOOD CONDITION

2001 Y REG RENAULT MASTER MM33

2001 Y REG RENAULT MASTER , MM33, 2.2 DCI ,5 SPEED ,PAS, MWB, O& H CONVERSION SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 10 SEATS OR 4 PLUS 2 WHEELCHAIR SPACES, RICON TAIL LIFT, UNWIN TRACKING, MINT CONDITION ONE OWNER LOW MILES

NEW UNREGISTERED IVECO 50.C13

NEW UN REGISTERED IVECO 50.C13 2.9 TURBO DIESEL IRIS CONVERSION 16 SEATS. SLAM FRONT ENTRY DOOR, HIGH ROOF. BONDED WINDOWS, M2 FLOOR, M2 HIGH BACK SEATS UNWIN TRACKING , HEATER, NEW UNDERFLOOR PLS TAIL LIFT, NEW CONVERSION IN STOCK

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER

2000 X REG RENAULT MASTER , LM35, 2.2 DCI ,5 SPEED ,PAS, LWB, O & H CONVERSION SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 12 SEATS OR 8 PLUS 3 WHEELCHAIR SPACES, LOWERING SUSPENSION & FOLD DOWN RAMP, UNWIN TRACKING, LOW MILES,

2001 Y REG FORD TRANSIT

2001 Y REG FORD TRANSIT NEW SHAPE 350, DIESEL, 5 SPEED MANUAL, LWB, PAS, HIGH ROOF SIDE LOADING DOOR WITH STEP, 8 HIGH BACK SEATS, UNWIN TRACKING FOR W/CHAIRS RATCLIFF UNDERFLOOR TAIL LIFT, ONE OWNER, VERY VERY LOW MILES ONLY 5,800 MILES

COACH+BUS BUYER VEHICLE SALES

2000	NEOPLAN TRANSLINER 49 seats with air con
2000	BOVA 49 seats exec
2000	MERCEDES 53 seats, Hispano Vita
2000	VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAGON 49 seats exec
1998	SCANIA IRIZAR TRIAXLE 49 seats exec
1998	MERCEDES 814 AUTOBUS NOUVELLE 33 seats
1995	VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 53 seats
1998	DAF CAETANO 53 seats, new MOT

Assorted contract vehicles available.
Ring for details

Many more vehicles to come, ring for list

WANTED FOR CASH
- your surplus vehicles

AD COACH SALES
Telephone: 01884 860767 Fax: 01884 860711
Email: ggoodwin@adcoachsales.co.uk
www.adcoachsales.co.uk

D&H TRAVEL

1986 Volvo £5000
Duple Body, 53 seater, good engine and gearbox. been prepared for MOT

1997 ('P reg.') Mercedes 814D Vario £8995
Alexander Body, Service Bus Low Floor, 25 Seats
Tested until 21/07/07

1993 ('L reg.') Mercedes 709D £3995
Plaxton Body, Service Bus 25 Seats, Tested until 09/02/07

2004 LDV £11995
16 Seater, Fitted 3 point seatbelts
Tested until May 2007

1993 ('L reg.') Mercedes 709D
£2995ono
Alexander Body, Service Bus 25 Seats, Tested until end of year

1990 ('G reg.') Mercedes 709D
£2250ono
Scott Body, 25 Seats Coach Seats, Fitted Seatbelts
Tested until 15/01/07

1986 Exec Jonkee
£11500
Scania Engine, New MOT, 49 Seater

Peugeot 406 Estate Cars
£2000-£3000
White Cars, choice of 6

W Reg Peugeot Expert
£2450
6 Seater

Tel: 01539 730 555
Out of hours: 07918 661 625

DUBLIN BUS

Due to fleet Replacement • **Offer for sale by Tender of following vehicles (in one or more lots)**

6 x MV Type Mercedes 814D (Vario) Minibuses

Euro Coachbuilders Bodies
All these vehicles are fitted with:
- Mercedes OM904LA engines,
- Allison AT454 fully auomatic transmissions
- Telma electric retarders

Overall capacity is 29 seater plus luggage bay
Buses range from 1997 to 1998 vintage

34 x RH Type Olympian Double Deck .

Leyland Olympian Chassis with Walter Alexander "R" type City 9.8 metre bodies .Cummins L10-185 engine with ZF 4HP500 fully automatic transmission with integral retarder. Front and centre doors plus O/S rear emergency exit.
Overall capacity 94 persons comprising 47 U/S seats , 27 L/S seats and 20 standing.
Buses range from 1991 to 1993 vintage

To request a tender form and to make arrangements to view the vehicles please contact :

Mr John Hunt , Materials Manager, Dublin Bus , 21 Phibsboro Road, Dublin 7, Ireland
Telephone +353-1-7033475 Faxsimile +343-1-8303126 Email: john.hunt@dublinbus.ie

Closing date for receipt of completed tenders is 17.00 hours on 17th August 2006

B&D HOLT LTD

NEW AND USED Buses, Coaches & Commercial Vehicles

BMC 850 Club Probus Minicoach,

BMC 850 Club probus minicoach in silver, blue trim, curier seat, dual PA system, radio/radio cassette, DVD, TV and cd player. Curtains, tinted glass, double glazed, air condition, ferry lift, wheel trims, reversing camera, sat nav, taxed and tested

£60,000

JUST ARRIVED

2002 Dennis Plaxton SLF
29 seats, 1 owner, clean all -round condition
SLF £49,500 +VAT

1999 Dennis Dart ALX 2000
38 seats, tested, nice and clean
SLF £38,500 +VAT

Mercedes Benz 1997 814D Vario Service bus
Alexander Bodywork, 27 seats +10 standees and pen.
Direct from a very large operator, all with full MOT
.....£9,950 +VAT (choice of 3)

Oprate Exel SLF
Service bus.....£26,000

Mercedes Benz 1997 814D Vario
Painted in white, fitted with 29 high back coach seats,
3 point seat belts, Fully tested .....£13,500+VAT (choice of 3)

Mercedes Benz 1998 512D Service bus
(sprinter running gear) 20 seats plus standees, power door,
one owner from new. Sold with full MOT, Ideal for rural route ..... £6,950+VAT

Dennis Dart 1993 Plaxton pointer
34 seats plus standees. In white. Cummins engine. Allison auto box. Sold with full MOT ..... £8,500+VAT

Mercedes Benz 1995 508D
Fitted with 20 high back coach seats with 3 point belts, power door sold with 12 months MOT ..... £4,850 +VAT

Dennis Dart L Reg
1994 34 seaters Dennis Dart L reg East Lancs bodies, **choice of 2**
Dennis Darts 1991-1993 various conditions, various coachbuilders no sensible offers refused

Large selection of Dennis Darts - Direct from a large operator. In stock from 28-34 seats

SOLD AS SEEN - ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS MAKE US AN OFFER!

LATEST SPEC BMC PROBUS MINICOACH
Fully loaded manual 6-speed ZF gearbox, Cummins Euro 3 engine, 35 seats plus courier, D/G tinted glass, PA system, TV/DVD, wheel trims, ferry lift & many more extras.
2 years manufacturer warranty (Also 5 speed ZF Automatic option available)

THE AUTOSAN EAGLE
55/67/70 SEAT
SCHOOL COACH

THE CONDOR
12 METRE
CITY BUS/SCHOOL BUS

Brand new school buses
Brand new school buses available some already in stock
55-70 seats various makes and models
BMC FE1100's BMC Condours SLF

Autosan Eagle
Autosan Eagle school coach prices from £69,000 - £115,000 depending on make and spec all new

STOCK CHANGING REGULARLY
Part exchange welcome
Finance arranged on used vehicles all competitive rates subject to status
Tel: 01204 650999 Fax: 01204 665300 Email: *bevholt@bdholt.com*

DUDLEY'S COACHES LTD

Poplar Garage, Radford, Inkberrow, Worcestershire WR7 4LS

1982 Leyland Leopard Plaxton Supreme 53 seats, 11 metre, manual gearbox, 3 owners from new, MoT July 2007 STO 244X £4,000 +VAT
1987 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500 53 seats MoT November 2006 D225 LWY £5,000 +VAT
1988 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3200 53 seats MoT December 2006 E168 OMD £3,000 +VAT
1988 Dennis Javelin Plaxton Paramount 3200 53 seats MoT January 2007 F952 ENH £3,000 +VAT
1989 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3200 53 seats MoT October 2006 F940 WFA £5,000 +VAT

All vehicles are fitted with seatbelts

Telephone 01386 792206 Fax 01386 793373

1997 MERCEDES 711d

24 Seater Coach. Very good condition throughout, full years MOT, owned from new. Deep Boot. Autobus Clasique conversion. £12,000 or very near offer plus VAT. Tel: 01622 738932 Daytime or 07808 363850 eve/weekends.

CLINTONA

High Quality Minicoach Specialists

1998 (R) Iveco 59. 12 bus. 27 seats plus 8 standing. Destination Equipment. Power Doors. MoT to March 07 and July 07. Choice of two.
£4,995 each ono

1995 (M) Mercedes 709 Bus. 25 seats plus 8 standing. Destination Equipment. Power Doors. All white. MoT to Feb 07.
£4,800 ono

1994 (M) Mercedes 709 Bus. 16 seats plus 2 wheelchair spaces. Tail lift. Destination Equipment. Power Doors. Mot to July 07.
£3,995 ono

1993 (L) Mercedes 709 Bus. 25 seats plus 8 standing. Destination Equipment. Power Doors. All white. MoT to Oct 06
£3,995 ono

Ring Clintona Minicoaches on 01277 (Brentwood) 215526

Little Warley Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3HA

1998 – Mercedes 814D Plaxton Beaver Service Buses.

Choice of 3 buses, 2 x 31 seats and 1 x 27 seats.
2 fully automatic gearboxes, 1 manual.
All newly painted white and in good condition.
Power door, destination equipment front, side and rear.
In excellent mechanical and body condition.
MOT dates: March and April 2007 – just off service.
£12,000.00 + VAT which includes the tyres.
Telephone John Wright on 01491 – 827841 or 07881 788285

Thames Travel (Wallingford) Ltd.
Oxfordshire.

COACH+BUS BUYER

PRODUCTS

DRIVING

ATTENTION:

Tour Operators visiting East Anglia

Local PCV driver seeks up to 2 days work each week after April 11 2007.

Tel: 01206 262483

INSURANCE

Gauntlet

EXCLUSIVE MINIBUS & SMALL FLEET SCHEME

Tel: 0113 244 8686

Gauntlet Risk Management Ltd
Crown House, Armley Road, Leeds LS12 2EJ
F: 0113 243 8668 W: gauntletgroup.com
Authorised & Regulated by the Financial Services Authority

AHEAD OF THE REST

www.ahead-of-the-rest.com

N° 8 STATION ROAD, THURNSCOE, Nr ROTHERHAM, S YORKS S63 0JR

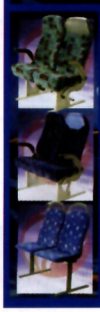
New pillows, will fit with or without Velcro on seats; curtains, H covers and pillows all co-ordinated colours, seersucker, polyester, cotton drill and t.bag headcovers most colours, ties, epaulettes, badges etc.
Screen printing and in house embroidery service.

Phone or fax

(01709) 894804

10244/TRI

PHOENIX SEATING LIMITED
for Strength, Safety, Comfort & Style



Phoenix Seating Limited manufactures the highest quality seating for the commercial and passenger markets.
The whole manufacturing process from concept through design to engineering is carried out in-house. All seats are tested to M1,M2,M3 standard directive **761115** and **ECE** R14.05 using accredited test centres throughout the U.K. Phoenix offers a comprehensive consulting and design package ensuring customers specific requirements are precisely met.

01384 296622

SUMMIT

AT LLOYD'S

Quote for a single vehicle to large fleets
Cover for foreign travel available
Cover for windscreens and glass available
Pay by instalments

Please contact your broker for further details

Amlin House, Parkway, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0UR

Part of Amlin Insurance Services, an Appointed Representative of Amlin Underwriting Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

Coach Insurance

WRIGHTSURE
insurance group

Bus Coach & Minibus Insurance
Liabilities – Property -
Coach Holiday Travel Insurance

NEW VENTURES ESPECIALLY WELCOME

Tel: 0151 494 0007
Fax: 0151 494 2560
email: liverpool@wrightsure.com

The Wrightsure Insurance Group is a trading style of Wrightsure Services Ltd, Wrightsure Insurance Services (North west)Ltd and Wrightsure Service (Hampshire) Ltd, all of whom are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority

GARAGE EQUIPMENT

BUTTS OF BAWTRY

Commercial Equipment
Mobile Columns, Scissor Lifts,
4 Post Lifts
email info@jhmbuttco.com
website www.jhmbuttco.com
Tel 01302 710868

MOBILE COLUMN LIFTS

Brand new mobile lifts for sale, 8 tonne per column

BEST PRICE IN UK

0845 644 9303

Finkbeiner
Lifting Systems

MAYWOOD EQUIPMENT GROUP LTD

Tel: 01622 718044
www.maywoodgroup.co.uk

TRAINING

NOTES UPDATED 4 TIMES A YEAR

C.P.C

You've all known someone who's taken a course at Whalley over the past 25 years. Make sure you get yours this year. *PHONE NOW.*

Whalley Centre for Transport Studies (Lancs)

Tel: 01254 248177
Fax: 01254 240858

Email:
info@whalleytransportstudies.co.uk

HEAVY DUTY STEEL BUILDINGS

✧ Bus Workshops ✧ Secure Storage
✧ Supplied any width, any length
✧ Building to BS5590 ✧ Doors high enough for Double Deckers
✧ Finance available
For further information phone

10518/BUL

BLUELINE BUILDINGS
01709 578333 anytime

DIGITAL TACHOS
PowerPoint £99
or driver, manager, trainer courses with us or at your base

CPC
PSV / HGV
Intensive
Accommodation
Homestudy
CD & MP3
DVD

E-Tuition & Buy on line

City & Guilds Approved

01984 656 310
www.friendberry.co.uk

TRAINING

NOVADATA 01376 552999

PCV CPC courses
National, 21-25 Aug '06
International, 18-19 Nov
Braintree, Exam 8th Sept '06

Digital Tachograph Training for drivers, managers & City & Guilds trainers

www.novadata.co.uk

REGISTRATIONS

• SPEEDY REGISTRATIONS CO LTD •

'Buy with confidence – CNDA Member'

£150		£50		£50	
BIG 3631	BIG 7764	AIG 5337	EIG 1296	KJZ 6367	PUI 2631
BIG 3632	BIG 8356	AIG 9693	EIG 1391	KJZ 6368	PUI 2632
BIG 6635	BIG 8441	DIG 8562	EIG 1392	KJZ 6369	PUI 2633
BIG 6861	BIG 8443	DIG 8563	IEZ 4391	LKZ 7734	RKZ 6281
BIG 7612	BIG 8447	DIG 8564	IEZ 4392	NUI 7736	RKZ 6282
BIG 7657	BIG 8470	DIG 8565	IEZ 4393	NUI 7752	SLZ 3645
BIG 7669	BIG 8474	EIG 1260	INZ 6914	OUI 6364	SLZ 3646
BIG 7696	BIG 8554	EIG 1294	INZ 6915	OUI 6365	SLZ 3647
BIG 7745	BIG 9312	EIG 1295	INZ 6916	OUI 8270	SLZ 3648

We Buy for Cash, also Part Exchange
Tel: (028) 6638 7124 Fax (028) 6638 7771
Millwood, Lisbellaw, Co. Fermanagh, N. Ireland BT94 5HQ

BARRY HALL INSTALLATIONS

securon

- Seat Belt Supplies
- Hand Rail Padding
- Next Day Delivery
- Seat Belt Installations
- Double Deckers Seat Belted

The UK's no1 Seatbelt Installers

Call the Experts: 01522 689911

Email: info@bhiuk.com

www.bhiuk.com

Fax: 01522 689922

10567/SBE

Your Seat Belt Installation is our Reputation

TYRES

TD TYRES

205/75R 17.5	Uniroyal	£73.00
205/75R 17.5	Bridgestone	£85.00
215/75R 17.5	Uniroyal	£77.00
215/75R 17.5	Bridgestone	£90.00
245/70R 19.5	Continental	£129.00
245/70R 19.5	Budget	£105.00
255/70R 22.5	Michelin	£199.00
275/70R 22.5	Matador	£125.00
275/80R 22.5	Bridgestone	£159.00
295/80R 22.5	Goodyear	£179.00
295/80R 22.5	Michelin XZE2	£209.00
295/80R 22.5	Budget	£119.00
295/80R 22.5	Regal	£162.00
295/80R 22.5	Bridgestone	£185.00
305/75R 24.5	Goodyear	£295.00
315/80R 22.5	Regal	£173.00
315/80R 22.5	Budget	£129.00
315/80R 22.5	Michelin	£265.00
315/80R 22.5	Goodyear	£189.00

More Stock Available

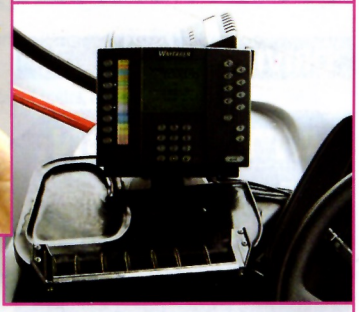
All prices are subject to VAT and availability

Tel: 0800 298 4755

www.tdtyres.com

TICKETING EQUIPMENT

CAMBIST - Fast, efficent fare collection.



- Driver friendly.
- Reduces dwell time.
- Gives a professional image - all coins organised.
- Dispensers can have any combination of coins.
- Mounting options - dash or cab door.

Contact us now for further details

Tel 0208 9089 088
Fax 0208 9089 099
e-mail sales@jgts.com

John Groves TICKET SYSTEMS

your one stop shop for fare collection

CAMBIST

WAYFARER authorised UK agent www.wayfarer.co.uk Pay Cell® PENDAMATIC www.cambist.se

WAYFARER 'SAVER' TICKET MACHINES

WAYFARER '3' MACHINES, DEPOT READERS, BASEPLATES, MODULES, FULL SYSTEMS OR ADD ONS AVAILABLE.

ALMEX 'A90' TICKET MACHINES, DEPOT READERS, BASEPLATES & 256x ACES AVAILABLE.

WAYFARER MCV Card Readers
WAYFARER '2' Machines, Depot readers, baseplates and modules
FULL SYSTEMS OR ADD ONS AVAILABLE.
Full repair service for Wayfarer and mechanical machinery.
SETRIGHT AND ALMEX 'A' MECHANICAL MACHINES AVAILABLE.
Driver Cash Boxes, Change Dispensers, Cash Bags on Bus Cash Vaults.
Ticket Rolls - Plain or Printed + Thermal
PART EXCHANGE AND/OR OLD & REDUNDANT EQUIPMENT PURCHASED

MARK TERRILL - TICKET MACHINERY

5 De Grey Close, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2JR
Tel/Fax: 01273-474816. Mobile: 07770-666159
Email: mark.terrill@ukonline.co.uk

10421/TIC

RECOVERY

BOARHUNT RECOVERY

0870 872 8040

- Damage free recovery by qualified professionals
- Hampshire and the UK
- 24hour computerised control room
- Service without compromise

FORT WALLINGTON IND ESTATE, MILITARY RD, FAREHAM HANTS PO16 8TT

Tel 01329 282 999 Fax 01329 245 396

E mail recovery@boarhuntgarage.co.uk

All departments have ISO 9001 2000 and PAS 43 accreditation.

Seen something funny? Send it to *mark.williams@rouncymedia.co.uk*, fax 0845 2802927 or write to: Last Stop, CBW, 3 The Office Village, Cygnet Park, Forder Way, Hampton, Peterborough PE7 8GX

Office Diary

From the editorial assistant...

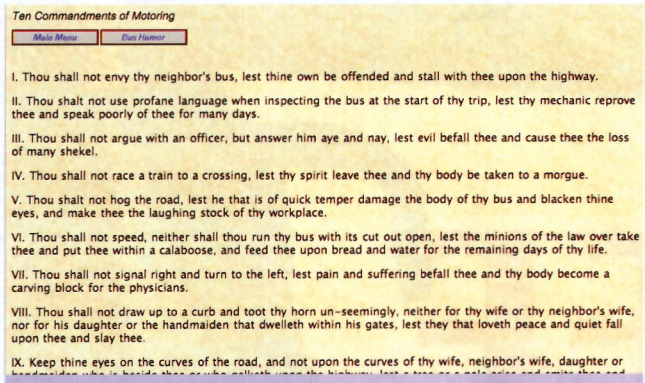
Monday: It's press day, so my Mac on the editorial table is taken over by designers and sub-editors. This week I sit at the boss' table. Publisher Andy comes back from his holiday (again) to help in the usual battle to get the last few pages over to the printers. Last page leaves at 3am - some eight hours after I do.

Tuesday: Andy (news editor) races from his interview with John Hodgkins - an in-depth look at ATCO's quality network agreements so beloved of the Transport Select Committee - to the Porsche garage in Hatfield, where he collects a Boxster. My journey home to Boston in a noisy Citröen is not so exciting

Wednesday: Get a call from a Neil Rennilson, chief executive of Lothian Buses, who questions our idea to invert *Out & About* and stick it on the back of the mag. His secretary somehow failed to recognise the magazine as *CBW* and so threw it in the bin! We hope she has been suitably warned.

Thursday: Manage to finally track down names and addresses for 'Letter of the Week' winners over the past 20 or so issues. It only took me three weeks! Pass the list on to Corgi, who promises the prize buses will be posted out soon. 'Deliveries', 'People' and 'Tour News' are done - the issue is starting to take shape. Then the office empties early as we head for a *CBW* night out...

Friday: A few sore heads this morning, but a full office none the less. An operator phones to say section 19 licences are out of control in his area. Cue a *CBW* investigation - watch this space...



Ten Commandments of Motoring

Main Menu | Bus Humor

I. Thou shall not envy thy neighbor's bus, lest thine own be offended and stall with thee upon the highway.

II. Thou shalt not use profane language when inspecting the bus at the start of thy trip, lest thy mechanic reprove thee and speak poorly of thee for many days.

III. Thou shall not argue with an officer, but answer him aye and nay, lest evil befall thee and cause thee the loss of many shekel.

IV. Thou shall not race a train to a crossing, lest thy spirit leave thee and thy body be taken to a morgue.

V. Thou shalt not hog the road, lest he that is of quick temper damage the body of thy bus and blacken thine eyes, and make thee the laughing stock of thy workplace.

VI. Thou shall not speed, neither shall thou run thy bus with its cut out open, lest the minions of the law over take thee and put thee within a calaboose, and feed thee upon bread and water for the remaining days of thy life.

VII. Thou shall not signal right and turn to the left, lest pain and suffering befall thee and thy body become a carving block for the physicians.

VIII. Thou shall not draw up to a curb and toot thy horn un-seemingly, neither for thy wife or thy neighbor's wife, nor for his daughter or the handmaiden that dwelleth within his gates, lest they that loveth peace and quiet fall upon thee and slay thee.

IX. Keep thine eyes on the curves of the road, and not upon the curves of thy wife, neighbor's wife, daughter or

Googled...

http://www.strayhound.com/drivingsten.htm

Enter 'funny bus' into Google and the first link is to a site dedicated to funny bus stories. The site has a host of amusing tales from drivers, and the messageboards are full of interesting observations, but the best bit of the site has to be the ten commandments of motoring. Number nine: "Keep thine eyes on the curves of the road, and not upon the curves of thy wife, neighbor's wife, daughter or handmaiden who is beside thee or who walketh upon the highway, lest a tree or a pole arise and smite thee and utterly destroy thee and thy bus forever." Made us chuckle in the office.

We love you, Butler...

Reg Varney, star of ITV's 'On the Buses' has just celebrated his 90th birthday. Few people knew that Reg, who played Stan Butler in the popular sitcom, had a PSV licence so he could drive the buses for real.

Eastern National's Wood Green depot in north London was used for filming and the same firm also supplied the vehicles, Bristol FLF Lodekkas.

Three spin-off movies followed the series, the first of which was to become a major box office success, surpassing James Bond's Diamonds are Forever released in the same year.

The show followed Stan and his conductor Jack Harper, whose antics never failed to

rile the petty-minded and obnoxious, inspector Blakey, played by Stephen Lewis.

The only three surviving cast members of 'On the Buses' are Reg, Stephen Lewis and Anna Karen, who played Stan's sister.

Hair of the dog

A Jack Russell has become a regular with bus drivers after jumping on their vehicles to head down the pub.

The terrier, called Ratty, has got a gammy leg so, instead of walking the three miles to his local, he hops on the Number Ten bus.

The five-year-old pooch, who lives on a farm at Dunnington, near York, makes regular trips to the Black Bull on the outskirts of the city, patiently waiting in the queue at the bus-stop by his home.

A barmaid at the pub used to give him water and titbits and then he'd get driven back - although on occasion he's even caught the bus back himself.

Ratty also regularly catches the school bus - where he's a favourite with the young passengers - and regularly takes mystery trips, courtesy of the bus company.

Owner Gary Kay, 41, originally bought Ratty to keep the rodents down on his farm, but the terrier went lame after a car ran over his paw - although it's certainly not stopped his adventurous spirit.

"Where he goes sometimes I'm not sure, but he always gets back," Mr Kay told *CBW*.

"And one of the bus drivers told me has had seen him getting on the bus to come home in the past."

He added: "Ratty has great road sense and is a crafty little dog. It doesn't surprise me that he gets on the bus - that's just the sort of dog he is."

Mr Kay's ten-year-old son, William, looks after Ratty and thinks the world of his free-spirited pal.

"All my mates think he's a cool dog. He is really funny and he is my best mate."

The commercial director of bus company First, Peter Edwards, said: "Clearly, Ratty found out that we recently stopped charging for dogs on our buses."

He added: "I've heard of dogs waiting for people to get off buses - but nothing like this."

Dilbert

ALICE, I HEAR THAT YOUR PROJECT IS STRESSFUL.
SOMETIMES IT HELPS IF YOU ASK YOURSELF: WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN?
HOW'D THE PEP TALK GO?
www.dilbert.com scottadams@aol.com
1-24-05 ©2005 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

COACH & COMMERCIAL LTD

Specialists in Coach Repairs

6/27 Fri

We Specialise in Insurance Work

FREE ESTIMATES AT YOUR PREMISES

Between your demanding work schedule

▶ Replacement Stretch Panels ▶ Re-sprays - can be finished in three days ▶ Refurbish vehicles with updated front and backs ▶ All accident repairs, big or small, on all makes of vehicles ▶ Manufacture Body Panels ▶ Mobile Body Repairs ▶ Emergency repair service to get your vehicle back on the road ▶ Fleet Maintenance

▶ NO JOB TOO BIG OR SMALL

Tel: David Baker 01279 730888
Mobile: 07956 429239 (anytime)

Based near Stanstead Airport